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THE
POSTHUMOUS
DAUGHTER:

A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



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THE
POSTHUMOUS DAUGHTER.

LETTER XLVII.

FROM LADY ALCONDALE TO MISS CAROLINE
CLARENDON.

I WAS quite shocked, my dear Caroline, to leave you behind me yesterday ; but as I witnessed what you suffered from Lord Alcondale's intelligence, I judged it kinder not to press you to accompany us hither, as he had, unthinkingly, invited Sir Frederick Hambledon to take a seat in the carriage; believing your own apartment would at present be more agreeable to you. The most cruel restraint I know is that of being obliged to as-

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sume cheerfulness when our hearts are afflicted with sorrow ; yet I not only see the necessity of appearing what you are *not*, but urge you to disguise your feelings,

“ So shall hypocrisy be virtue in you.”

Sir Frederick Hambledon's future repose may depend upon your accomplishing this difficult task. Be *his* friend, *your own* friend, and Belgrave's, in one act. Recollect that the General repeatedly answered Lord Alcondale's interrogatory, by saying, “ he should not press his son to marriage if you was once out of the way.” Ask your own heart whether you will be more miserable as the wife of Sir Frederick, rendering him happy, and saving Belgrave from a hated union, or poverty, (for he may determine which shall be his lot) ; or continuing single, disappointing an amiable man who sincerely loves you, and devoting Belgrave



to his fate. I trust I know your answer: remember, Caroline, the best remedies are always bitter, and antidotes are less palatable than poisons.

The occasion of all this sudden violence is the General's determination to winter abroad. His asthmatic complaint is much increased, owing to his ungovernable passions. I doubt not, his pretext for hurrying this unnatural matrimonial union is, that he cannot be easy while his *dear* son is in danger of becoming the property of an artful woman. Lord Alcondale took fire, and very high words ensued between them. "Well," said the General, "I am sorry I have expressed my feelings so strongly, but as an honest man, can I go abroad without trying to bring back my son to reason, and in that case making a new will, for the one now existing cuts the rebellious hero off with a shilling?" "As an honest man, General," replied Lord Alcon-

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dale, "you cannot go to bed *this* night with such a will in force." "Pretty strongly *express'd*," said the monster, "I think Belgrave proved his wisdom in chusing so able an advocate."—"Upon reflection, Sir, I believe you will find me a friend to your reputation, as well as to your son's peace; I have no other motive for action than serving my friends; and I hope that what I have already said to each party will prove me a disinterested man, who wishes to make a perfect reconciliation between father and son. Allow Capt. Belgrave a double portion of time, Sir, to bring this affair to a conclusion: he obeys you, by visiting Lady Annamaria Albion frequently, and further acquaintance with her may make him less averse to marriage."

This request was blessed with success. The old man means to go to Paris for a fortnight, and from thence to the south of France as soon as possi-

ble after Christmas, previous to which he requires his son's compliance with his commands. The evil day, you see, is only protracted; but I pray Heaven it may be productive of good! Lady Albion mentions the connection with great satisfaction to her friends.

As to Captain Belgrave, he is so headstrong, that I fear he will not suffer his friends to serve him; he would ruin *all* by his quickness and perversity, did not Lord Alcondale protest he would leave him to follow other advice than his, if he takes one step without consulting him first. He had absolutely written a letter to Lady Annamaria, to explain his situation, and throw himself upon her generosity. Had this been received, I am persuaded no interposition could have availed him, as the haughty Mother would have revenged his insensibility to her daughter's charms, and the indignity of being rejected, by exposing the son's

confidence to the Father, at whom she has, to my knowledge, long set her cap.

Sir James Saville is charmed with your conduct to Sir Frederick. He told me, (as he handed me into the carriage,) that this young man had justified his good opinion of him by an action that morning, which, if known to Caroline Clarendon, would induce her to volunteer her hand to him "But," said he, "I am forbid to relate it." What this can be I know not, but I know it must be a capital action when Sir James expresses a *surprise* at it.

I have been down stairs this instant, to scold him for placing the child on the skitish poney: he frightened me out of my wits, though he held him fast, for the animal reared up, and the boy screamed, which my Lord echoed in fun, while I was on the stairs. I can scarcely hold my pen steadily, so I

shall bid you adieu till to-morrow. Will you use your interest with Sir James to let his servants bring about three dozen desert spoons, and as many silver forks, for, on looking over my list, there are seventy visitors, and they may be of service. Love and compliments from all to all, ever yours,

M. ALCONDALE.

LETTER XLVIII.

CAPTAIN BELGRAVE TO THE EARL OF AL-
CONDALE.

YOU will judge me ungrateful for your friendly interference with my Father, when I tell you that *you* have made me infinitely more miserable than I have yet been. It is true I *was* wretched, but not by a thousand degrees what I now *am*.

Be explicit, for Heaven's sake! Can Caroline Clarendon so quickly transfer her affections to another? Can she so readily approach the altar with perjury warm upon her lips? Did I rightly understand you? Did you not inform me this might probably be the case? Undeceive me, I beseech you. Does she know that I will perish before

I utter the abhorred "I will" to any ear but hers? And yet *to* her's the threatened dreadful curse precludes my voice.

This conviction is sufficient; farewell, my friend! I am quitting England; my mind is torn with bitter anguish. Farewell! God bless you!

AUGUSTUS BELGRAVE.

LETTER XLIX.

FROM MISS MARIA SAVILLE TO THE COUN-
TESS OF STAFFORDSON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

JUST as I was stepping into the carriage to come down to Alcondale Park, one of the Bow-street runners came to inform Papa that the valuable crescent you lamented so much has been fortunately heard of; it was pawned on the very day I lost it for a large sum of money, and the person who pledged it is now in custody upon suspicion. I can only say, that I perfectly rejoice at this event, as I was quite wretched at seeing you regret the accident so sincerely. However, this part of the affair out of the question, it was a *happy misfortune*, for I am certain Papa will give me the one which was made for you in lieu of your own, and I am se-

cure my generous friend will restore me my enamelled ring, as Papa would never forgive me for parting with it.

I write these few lines in my bedroom to go early in the morning, as Papa bids me present his compliments, and says he will be ready to attend your Ladyship at twelve o'clock on Monday morning to the Public Office, to identify the jewels. I am quite vexed that I must go too, but it cannot be avoided. Sir Frederick Hambledon is perfectly delighted that what my dear Lady Staffordson has set her heart upon is again likely to be in her possession. He and Papa seem even more rejoiced than myself.

What a day of delight has this been! But to-morrow is the day of days. We were the last arrivers of thirty-seven; it was a quarter past one when the south gallery was thrown open for breakfast, and a most elegant one it

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was, coffee, tea, and chocolate, with all the finest fresh and dried fruits, sweetmeats, cakes, and many substantials, besides tongue, ham, blanc-manger, jellies, liqueurs. I have been at a hundred of these breakfasts before, but never saw one to equal it. Lady Alcondale does her honours with so much ease, that I shall quite study her manner against it is my business to preside at some elegant creature's table. We were all in fashionable morning dresses. So after this dejeuné was ended, she proposed a dance, saying she would allow one in the morning; but as to-morrow evening was her ball, she should not suffer dancing this night, as they would all be fagged to death with the double duty. We accordingly danced to an excellent band till half past three, when all adjourned to dress. At half past five we dined, at eight went into the tea-room, where the beaux followed us in half an hour; at nine, a concert of Gentlemen and

Lady performers, vocal and instrumental, till eleven, when an elegant supper (after half an hour's pause) made its appearance. After this was concluded, catches and glees kept us together till two, and while my maid is warming some cream of tartar for me I scribble this. I do not find myself slimmer for it yet.

The swains pay me amazing attention indeed. Madam Frances seems as glum as the deuce, to see *me* admired more than any woman here. My stays have quite pinched me to death all day: double doses of lemon will cure this defect, I hope, in a few days, or I must have a bone or two added. Seven single men, five with titles, give me a tolerable chance of making a conquest, for *now* is my time or never! I forgot to say Caroline and Sir Frederick seem quite agreed, she danced with him all the morning, and he has never quitted her side since she entered the house.

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I never saw her look so perfect v handsome as she does just now. Good night, my dearest Lady Staffordson; to-morrow two single Dukes, and all the nobility and gentry of the county, add to our present party. Pray God one or both of the first may be caught by that lively, enchanting little animal, your

MARIA SAVILLE.

LETTER L.

FROM MISS CAROLINE CLARENDON TO LADY
ALCONDALE.

WERE a balloon to be had for hire, I should certainly have got into one this morning, to have enquired after my dear Lady Alcondale, for the fatigue of two such days is enough to overset you. I do assure you, every creature is in admiration at your entertainment. I have talked of nothing else since, for many visits have been paid me with the view of hearing all the particulars. I hope you have seen the verses in the Morning Herald, for they are very elegant and very just, and certainly written by one of your visitors: but I know you die to hear all about the Bow-street affair. The gentlemen are both returned, and I am sorry to say

they have justified the unfavourable opinion I ever held of Lady Staffordson.

Sir James, Sir Frederick, Lady Staffordson, Maria Saville, and her maid Jones, attended at the office, where, to the confusion and regret of the Countess, her crescent was produced, and the proper owner properly exposed. The pawnbroker, to whom it was offered by a genteel looking man, received it as diamonds, and lent twenty guineas upon it. Some time after the man had disappeared, the pawnbroker began to suspect that the crescent was not diamond, and accordingly posted away to an eminent jeweller, who assured him the stones were paste, and that he had himself made it for the Countess of Staffordson, to resemble a very fine diamond one she brought as a pattern, and that its utmost value was nine guineas: he added, this crescent, he imagined, might

be the one so frequently advertised as diamond. The pawnbroker, enraged to find himself defrauded, instead of defrauding the man, (which he unguardedly informed the court was his intention) by owning he at first sight imagined it worth sixty guineas) conscientiously determined to bring the delinquent to justice, and believing he should find him out soon, he delayed giving information till he had actually apprehended him.

Lady Staffordson was asked whether the crescent was *her's*?—She said, if the value of it was one thousand pounds she should be scrupulous in taking her oath about it, but in this case she was ready to take her oath it was *not*. The jeweller's evidence was unknown to her at this time. Maria Saville's maid said, that she could safely decide whether it was the one Lady Staffordson had delivered into her hands, as before she gave it

into her young lady's hands, she endeavoured to wipe out with a glove a little green mark, which she could not effect—"it looked," said the maid, "like a button with a hole in it; now, if you please, I wish to see the one in question." Having examined it, she desired to take her oath it *was* the identical one Lady Staffordson delivered into her hands. Lady Staffordson's passion exposed her to a degree. She said she objected to the woman's oath being taken, who had never seen the crescent but *once*, when she, who had possessed it fourteen years, could not ascertain that it *was* her's; on the contrary, she would now take her oath it was not the one she had lent Miss Maria Saville. The gentleman then brought the jeweller into court, who said, that in the beginning of last winter Lady Staffordson employed him to make a whole set of paste to imitate the diamonds her Lord gave her on her marriage; that he had furnished Lord

Staffordson with the original jewels, and therefore copied the settings very closely; then took his oath that the crescent was the identical one he made. Lady Staffordson was suffered to re-enter her carriage without the assistance of either gentleman. Gaming has been the cause of all this infamous business.

But to the poor wretch who pawned this imaginary jewel, who was now brought in to give an account how he came by it. After clasping his poor emaciated hands together, and casting up his eyes to heaven in unfeigned agony, he exclaimed—"My God! am I here as a thief?" The Justice ordered him to acquaint him with the circumstance which brought the crescent into his possession. He then hemmed and wiped his eyes, and in a manner which touched every hearer, he said, that on the very morning of the Thursday he had been freed from a four months con-

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finement in the Fleet, for an unavoidable debt through sickness, by the bounty of the Humane Society ; that, upon his enlargement, he walked to the miserable lodging his wife had in Drury-lane, and found the reason why she had not carried him his usual breakfast was her being seized with sudden labour, at beholding a very infirm mother, whom she supported by her industry, run over by a gentleman's carriage in the Strand, and who lay in the only bed their miseries afforded ; that, distracted with the scene he beheld, he went in search of necessary assistance for his wife to a midwife who lives in the neighbourhood of ——— Square ; but, shocking as this is to humanity, this wretch refused to stir till one guinea and a half were deposited. In vain the afflicted husband entreated, implored, and promised—the monster was obdurate. The poor creature then went into a pawnbroker's shop, where he offered to pawn his little wardrobe,

(the cloaths on his back) but their value was only twelve shillings; this would not purchase the compliance of the brute, who had expressly declared he would not move till he had received a guinea and a half; but he again returned with the hope his further entreaties would prevail. As he half ran through Grosvenor Square, he saw Maria Saville alight from the coach; and saw the crescent fall into the gutter; he waited till the carriage drove off, when he picked it up. "Indeed, gentlemen," said he, "I blessed God for his goodness, for it seemed a miracle to preserve my wife and child. I went to another pawnbroker's, where my decent dress made me unsuspected. I received twenty guineas, and fifteen I have now got, and am willing to return."

The man was acquitted, and Sir James assured him, that if he bore a good character for sobriety, honesty,

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and industry, he would serve him ; enquired who would answer for him : to his surprise he repeated some applicable lines out of Horace, and informed him, the Curate of some place, I have forgot where, would give a very satisfactory history of him, but that an eminent Banker in Lombard-street would corroborate what he now told him. He was the Schoolmaster of the village, and had six and thirty scholars, but that one of these children happening to die of the measles, which preyed on a very bad constitution, the parents universally withdrew their children, and left him with only twelve ; that a seventeen weeks illness made him incapable of attending these, and consequently they were taken home ; that bad debts, a mother and seven children to maintain, and illness, plunged him into new troubles ; that he fled the country, and came up to town, where his wife and family were obliged to follow, their goods being

trained for rent; and that his wife's industry had supported the whole family during four months imprisonment, which he suffered for non-payment of his butcher's bill.

Sir Frederick drove, before he returned hither, to the Banker's, who confirmed every thing this unfortunate sufferer had said. We have been allowed to add to their liberal contributions, and Mr. Hewitt will rejoice in the day that he was arraigned as a thief.

I did mean to fill up this sheet of paper, but Sir Frederick Hambledon is so tiresome, he jogs the table on purpose to make me quit my pen, and mount my horse this heavenly day. To my joy, he has this instant read, that the Royal George East Indiaman was spoke with three weeks after it left the Cape by a French ship of war. This day week is the first of October, thank

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God ! How I long to embrace this dear loved Sister ! I am suffered to write no further than to assure you how truly I am, dear Lady Alcondale's ever obliged and affectionate

CAROLINE CLARENDON,

P. S. If to-morrow is fine, Sir James, his Daughters, Sir Frederick, Mr. Beaumont, and I, spend the day at Richmond. Love and compliments to the Dowager Lady Alcondale, your good husband, and little Bacchus.— Maria's face is all coming out in a surfeit. She has owned that she has been taking acids morning and night all the summer. She suffers extremely just now, and is very impatient with it.— Farewell again.

LETTER LI.

FROM SIR FREDERICK HAMBLETON TO LORD
TRECOURCY, DUBLIN.

I AM quite concerned to find that I am indebted to your indisposition for your last letter: the jaundice is not a disorder got over in a short time, its lassitudes and languors affect the body even after the complexion is restored. Take care of entering too quickly into the society of bottle-holders, for you will be tempted to folly, I foresee. I think there is more *will* than *necessity* which keeps you so long in Dublin. I hope no inconstant fit has seized you; for the lovely woman, who considers herself as your property, can furnish you with no excuse for giving any other fair one the preference.

I have a morsel of gossip—the very morning that I last dispatched a packet to you, Lady Alcondale gave me very extraordinary information about my adored Caroline's Sister, who is shortly expected from India, unmarried, and though the child of the same parents, unprovided for. Mr. Clarendon died without knowing the situation his Wife was in, who, after seven months had elapsed, added another daughter to her family. In consequence of this ignorance, he left every estate and all his personal property to his *only* child, as he considered Caroline to be, with some very particular restrictions, after her Mother's two thousand a year jointure was deducted.--- Lord Alcondale thinks this Posthumous Child could set the will aside, as her exclusion proceeds from her Father's ignorance of such a claim upon him, not from any fault which might have led him to cut her off. In this event they would be joint heiresses.

Sir James Saville differs in opinion, from the following circumstance, which says, "I give and bequeath the aforesaid estates (enumerating them) &c. to my said daughter, Caroline Clarendon, in preference to all other claims, however supported." This article rivets it so wholly to her specifically, that he thinks it can never be got over. He had strong motives for leaving no loop-hole for lawyers to take advantage of, for a woman with whom he cohabited before his marriage, and by whom he had a son, has half persuaded many of his acquaintance that she had a prior right over the Mother of Caroline to be called his wife. Her ambitious spirit never let him rest: she pretended to their mutual friends that her affection for him was the reason why she did not compel him to do her justice, which reaching Mr. Clarendon's ear, made him foresee such efforts as she threatened to make use of would be attended with extreme

trouble and mortification to his widow and child, because such an artful woman might be induced to substantiate her claims in a court of law by false witnesses, as she possessed the most corrupt and abandoned heart. He consulted the first law characters, to make it unalienable from Caroline. She cannot touch the principal, for it becomes the property of Sir James Saville's daughters, if she makes an improper marriage; therefore, till she is absolutely married, she has not an acknowledged right to her fortune, and the *very* act gives the power to her husband, otherwise her friend says Caroline would divide it with her Sister, whose case is so peculiarly hard.

The Mother survived Mr. Clarendon a very few years, so that she could save nothing for this girl; but she made Caroline promise to take her under her protection as soon as she came of age, and to bind whoever

she married to receive her Sister as an inmate. Would to Heaven these terms were put to me to-morrow ! I think I should make no objection to any article my angel could propose : but I live in hopes this will be the case at no very distant period. I have no favoured rival to fear, and yet, when I see an absence of mind and indisposition of body, I create in my own jealous breast some unpleasant surmises : but Lady Alcondale drove them away, by bringing Caroline's independance to my view, which proves that her heart will accompany her hand. Sir James Saville's government is so light, that I am certain he would not even persuade her, if it was against her inclination. Her reception of me is always disembarassed, which again alarms me. *I* never see *her* without feeling and betraying an emotion I endeavour in vain to hide, and were *she* attached to *me* even in a smaller degree, I think this would be *her* situa-

tion also. *She* never is at a loss to explain *her* meaning, when we are conversing without witnesses—while *I* forget what *I* was saying. While *I* look at her---*mine* are genuine symptoms of love---what are *hers*?---perhaps of indifference. Thus do *I* conjure up the black and blue devils till *I* lay the perturbed spirit, by recollecting that she is mistress of herself.

Women are taught deceit from their cradles, they are not to confess that they love the very man in whose hands they place their persons and fortunes; nay, at this moment *I* know a lady, who assured me that she had never trusted her *caro sposo* with an acknowledgment of her regard for him: she has bred up four fine girls in the same prudent path. Whether the young ladies have obeyed her injunctions *I* know not; but this *I* do know, that, unless the secret transpired before *I* went to the altar, any other gentleman

than your humble servant should conduct them there.

Never was my mind in a more happy frame to receive the impressions of abhorrence at the abominable and inhuman traffic still carried on, to the disgrace of an enlightened age, than when I got your letter. My worthy friend, Sir James, is indefatigable in bringing forward a body of undoubted evidence against the Committee require it. I attended three private meetings, and I protest to you, I did not recover myself for days. The depravity of the fiends who exercise unlimited power over the oppressed Africans beggars all description! I leave you to Wilberforce's pamphlet. I am anxious to become acquainted with this exalted character, whose efforts, I trust, will be accompanied with success, as the reward for his benevolence. But am shocked to hear that there are beings, who at this mo-

ment vindicate a trade so replete with injustice and immorality ! Sir William Johnstone has given freedom to his slaves, and I am since informed two other gentlemen have followed his example—all of Virginia.

I met your Father last week at Sir Charles Frampton's. I think the old Peer is ogling Miss Winifred Frampton, the Baronet's Sister ; for I never saw a lady of forty-seven more studious to appear young and handsome : she is more exquisitely entertaining to an indifferent observer than it is possible to conceive ; her affectation of youth in manner and dress was ridiculous, and almost excited my laughter, when I considered the corpulent object she displays her beauties for. Never trust me again, if she does not design to make you her son-in-law. Sir Charles and his deary are, I think, in the plot. Madam Wini has a tongue, and my Lady has nerves, which will induce her to

promote her sister-in-law under any other roof if she can. I seriously protest to you I am in perfect earnest. The Peer displayed his oratorical powers on the ruined state of the nation, the incapacity and extortion of Ministers, the glorious Revolution in France, the destructive War in India, and the universal depravity of the times; in short, he gave us to understand, that unless he and his party were immediately employed to preserve the tottering fabric, the kingdom was undone. This conversation was interrupted by that piece of pomposity, Dr. Willingford, who has visited Miss Winifred twice for a cold. She now thought herself well, notwithstanding the Doctor, who assured her "that she must not be too precipitate:" shaking his head, seizing her pulse, and turning to Lady Frampton, with a most profound solemnity, "Madam," said he, "*we must be cautious, we must avoid wine, we must take a little diluting sack whey, we*

must go to bed early, and we believe we shall do very well." To give you an idea of the immoderate burst of laughter from all, but Miss Winifred, is impossible; a laugh that was aided by the inflexibility of her muscles, for that chaste and modest lady thought such a proposal, before her enamoured lover, should be treated with silence and contempt. I have only room to say I am always affectionately your's,

FREDERICK HAMBLEDON.

LETTER LII.

FROM MISS CAROLINE CLARENDON TO THE
COUNTESS OF ALCONDALE.

WHAT a cruel weight hangs around my heart! What a reluctance to write to my friend!—yes, to my dear Lady Alcondale. Ah! what can this unwillingness proceed from but self-condemnation! I have involuntarily deceived Sir Frederick Hambledon. My conscience, that faithful friend who condemns or approves our actions, words, and new created ideas, without partiality or prejudice, tells me I have done wrong, and embitters the conviction and punishment by its being irretrievable. My soul is torn with bitter anguish. My friend Sir James Saville's cruel kindness has overwhelmed me in lasting sorrow—with

regrets never to be done away. Un-
generous Guardian! you knew the
sensibilities of my my soul, and took
advantage of its weakness—but, alas!

“ I fruitless mourn to one who would not hear,
And weep the more, because I weep in vain.”

Belgrave has quitted England, and
the world is a chaos to *me*.

To such a friendship as *your's* the
sad tale should be told by the unhappy
victim: to other opinions than her own
no other person in the universe than
Lady Alcondale could induce me to
hold a pen at such a moment.

On our return from Richmond I
was so unfortunate as to be placed in
the carriage with Sir James Saville and
Sir Frederick Hambledon, the girls
having previously seated Mr. Beau-
mont in their's, and my Guardian ex-
plained that ambiguous sentence he
delivered to you, by telling me, “ *that*

action was sufficient to make me volunteer my hand to Sir Frederick if I knew it."

Let me do justice to this amiable, generous young man, by relating it to *you*, from whom he learned the particulars of my Sister's exclusion from a fortune to which she has as true a claim as myself. The day he removed to your house he placed ten thousand pounds in Sir James's hands, for the sole use of Sophia, without any restriction whatever, and nobly requested that I should remain ignorant of the circumstance, lest I might impute interested motives to his conduct.

At this relation my heart overflowed with expressions of gratitude, obligation, and esteem: he besought me to believe Sir James had distressed him extremely, by mentioning such a trifling proof of his regard, that his motive for wishing to conceal it from me was the fear it might operate as a bias on my mind, protesting to Heaven

that he loved me *too* sincerely to purchase the darling wish of his soul at the expence of my peace. This he so often and earnestly repeated, that my tears were uncontrollable. Sir James took advantage of the anguish he saw me in, by placing my unwilling hand in Sir Frederick's, who instantly uttered, to my confusion, his thanks to Heaven for the first boon it had to bestow ! A thunderbolt could not have startled me more—the power of utterance forsook me, and my silence was termed acquiescence by Sir James, who joined his thanks with Sir Frederick's for my generous resignation to his wishes—thus confirming my misery.

I have written twenty letters to undo this fatal error, but I have as often burned them. What can I say ? I implore you to assist me in extricating myself from this cruel conflict. I know you will afford me instant advice and consolation. My head is in a fever—

I cannot write more. God bless you!
Adieu.

Had you known Belgrave had quit-
ted England, I am sure you would
have told me. I have just now re-
ceived the inclosed from France; by
what means, Sophia's letter explains.
I beg its return as soon as you have
read it. Adieu.

CAROLINE CLARENDON.

LETTER LIII.

FROM MISS SOPHIA CLARENDON TO MISS
CLARENDON.

Royal George at Sea.

MY EVER DEAREST CAROLINE,

AS there is a possibility that La Minerve, a French man of war, (which has sailed for the two last days in company with the Royal George) may reach its destination sooner than we shall, I take the opportunity of assuring my loved Sister that I count the hours till I embrace her with all the tender affection my heart feels for her. Perhaps this will not arrive at your hands till the wished for moment is past, which I shall truly lament, as I would rather you had conquered the disappointment I know you will feel at not seeing Mrs. Irwin accompany me, be-

fore my arrival, than have our meeting damped by this alloy to our happiness ; the cause and effects of which have embittered every moment almost since my arrival at the Cape.

We had been seven days at the Cape waiting impatiently for the shifting of the winds, when another Indian bound for Europe, which had sailed a week later than the Royal George, touched here, and brought intelligence to dear Mrs. Irwin which gave us the deepest concern. On the third day after our departure, Mr Irwin was seized with a paralytic stroke, which at first threatened his dissolution, but afterwards there was a change little expected by the faculty, who gave it as their opinion that he might probably live some months, but there was no hope of his recovering so severe a shock. Our distress was exquisite, but Mrs. Irwin controlled her own feelings to soothe mine. She never shed

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a tear, but resigned herself entirely to God's will. In the evening a fever, in consequence of this alarming intelligence, awakened all my apprehensions for her; but it lasted only four-and-twenty hours, leaving her, however, extremely relaxed. In the morning Captain Detterville, who conveyed the unhappy intelligence to her, called upon her, when, to my grief, she communicated her fixed intention of returning to her husband in the first ship which touched at the Cape from Europe. He endeavoured to dissuade her, fearing she would be too late to render Mr. Irwin any service, while I sat by in silence, from the wish that she would pursue that plan most likely to contribute to her own repose, never doubting but she would in either case allow me to attend her. I feel secure, my dear Caroline will not condemn me for seeking to accompany this maternal friend at such a time, when the harassing situation of her mind called

for every alleviation in the power of friendship and tenderness to bestow. Long as I had indulged the hope of being again united to my Caroline, and anxious as I was to quit Bengal, I gave a return to *it* the preference, and was exquisitely wounded in my feelings when Mrs. Irwin gave me a positive denial.

When these unlooked-for events were made known to her woman, she added anew to my affliction, by declaring that no circumstance of emolument or intreaty should prevail upon her to return to India; that she had been already disappointed three times, and given a person to whom she had been engaged five years reason to imagine the want of a reciprocal regard detained her with her Mistress. She produced from her pocket-book the last letter he had written her, which expresses his suspicions on this subject very keenly, and concludes with saying, "should the October ships arrive

without you our connection is at an end." Though this vexed me to a degree, yet I could not condemn the poor girl, when probably I should have done the same in a similar situation. I then proposed to Mrs. Irwin the exchange of my maid for her's, which she agreed to, provided my servant agreed to it. While we were conversing upon the subject, this girl appeared, and proved her affection for me, by saying, "Madam, I believe I shall promote your peace, by offering to continue with a friend you love so particularly. As a servant I have had no opportunity (but the faithful discharge of my duty) to prove my gratitude to you for a thousand kindnesses; let this offer convince my Mistress I am grateful. I am ready to do whatever you require of me." I really embraced the girl, and Mrs. Irwin promised her a hundred pounds as a marriage portion.

The long-boat is ordered out to carry this letter, and similar ones, from all the passengers to La Minerve, so that I must say a few words of *self* before I conclude. I had no conception a voyage of this length could be so tolerable; a recollection of the confinement and sickness I suffered when a child made me dread it, as a real evil only to be borne with to purchase such a luxury as a re-union with my Sister: but I think differently now; the many pleasant people on board, and the universal inclination to be obliging, make it less formidable than you fresh-water beings can possibly believe or imagine.

Speaking of agreeable people, I must mention Mr. and Miss Parkinson, who are unwearied in their attentions to me; the former has been my school-master the whole way, and taught me Italian, which I now read perfectly, and he tells me I pronounce well also. You must be prejudiced in his favour,

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for I have reason to be attached to him.
The boat is ready, so I must close my
faithful page. How I anticipate the
shout of seeing land! God grant his
protection to us for the remainder of our
voyage, and indulge my longing eyes
“their dearest wish to see!” God bless
you again and again, prays your ever
affectionate Sister,

SOPHIA CLARENDON.

LETTER LIV.

LADY ALCONDALE TO MISS CAROLINE CLAREN-
KENDON.

I BEGIN, my dear Caroline, to answer the last part of your letter first, as it seems the article which occasions you most uneasiness. I *did* know Belgrave was about to quit England; I saw a letter from him to Lord Alcondale on the very morning of your coming hither; but I had little inclination to damp the present pleasure of my friends by any unpleasant information. He promised to write soon, and Lady Annamaria Albion informed me that he meant to return in the third week of December; she also told me his health obliged him to travel, as, since the cough of last winter, he has

had a serious depression on his chest. I know nothing more, upon my honour, from her.

Allow me to say that I was extremely hurt at one expression in your letter. Your friends *advise* you, Caroline—they do not *compel*. Whatever they urge is from motives of pure friendship. If you really feel an aversion to this worthy young man, say so without hesitation. I will assist you in breaking it off, notwithstanding what has passed.

I am very glad your letters went into the fire instead of Sir Frederick's hands. If you have not yet wrote to him, wave doing so till I get to you: we will in the course of tomorrow evening meet and talk over this affair dispassionately. I think, my dear friend, that on examination you will find your present discontents arise *more* from the regret Belgrave's absence

occasions, than from aversion to this amiable character, who is faultless. Suffer me to define the true cause of your melancholy, and convince you that you deceive yourself in attributing it to this cause. I again repeat, I will enable you to explain every thing to Sir James Saville and Sir Frederick Hambledon, if you continue in this wish to-morrow evening. But consider well first—your marriage would secure Belgrave from the union he detests, or poverty. If you are single, his *benevolent* Father, who “altereth not,” gives him the choice of the least evil, which, I am told, is the latter. From Lady Albion’s conduct, I however think I must be misinformed.

I forgot to thank you for a perusal of your Sister’s letter ; you may shortly look for her, and I shall rejoice heartily at her arrival, as it will be the means of diverting your thoughts from harrassing events. I enclose it

back according to your orders, though I had half a mind to keep it in my pocket till to-morrow, for fear it should be lost; and I plainly perceive, from the state of mind you wrote in, you had not read it *too* attentively. I find Lord Alcondale knew more of Lady Staffordson's genius than I did, when I checked him for anticipating how it would turn out at Bow-street. I only believed her to be a silly, weak, vain woman, led away by the desire of admiration, and bent upon carrying every point with her Husband, from the foolish idea, that it was inglorious to submit, when I should certainly blush at obtaining a victory over his maturer judgment: but then, (as Maria Saville says of you) I have no spirit.

Lady-Lucy has just left me with the most pleasing impressions of the goodness of her heart: I truly am charmed with her, and allow her uncensured for ever after, forget all her levities, in:

nocent follies, and affectations. My former opinion of her judgment was erroneous, and I recant, on the face of *this* paper, every thing but my belief that her disposition was good ; for, in a conversation about the virtues and vices of the present day, she has had an opportunity of shewing her discriminating powers to such advantage, that I was quite astonished at her unexpected capacity.

You will be surprised at hearing that the celebrated Mrs. Gleamurry is upon a visit to Lady Lucy Saville, and more so, that I mean to wait on that unfortunate lady to-morrow. I have often joined in condemning her when old Mrs. Saville attempted a palliation of her conduct ; but, I trust, I am always open to conviction, and the certainty that your opinions about her coincided with mine, makes me, in justice to her, relate what Lady Lucy

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told me, who has known her for years, as their parents were particular friends.

I must be brief, for I have a horrid head at relating a story. You know Mrs. Gleamurry was Mrs. Admiral Hazlewood's daughter, by her first husband, and bred up consequently in the most fashionable stile: her beauty and accomplishments gained universal admiration and some very great offers, but among the number of mere dangles was the noble Duke who sat next to you at super on my ball-night. He paid her very particular attentions from her first appearance in public, and continued a most obsequious attendance on her for two winters without intermission, when he found opportunity to profess the most ardent passion, which he, however, guarded in such a manner, that she was always at a loss to make her reply. She observed that he avoided speaking of marriage in direct terms, though not in ambiguous ones,

for he would consult her opinion upon the building his house, furniture, and temple: every thing which *he* was undetermined upon, was left to *her* decision. The newspapers announced that this unexpected union would shortly take place, and as every body spoke of it, Mrs. Hazlewood asked her daughter "whether the Duke's intentions were serious, or whether his behaviour was mere gallantry?" She replied, "That she had her fears they were only the latter;" and told her the reasons she had for thinking so. Mrs. Hazlewood admonished her daughter to be upon her guard, and remarked, that if he was seriously inclined, the knowing that another suitor of rank had proposed, would speedily bring him to declare himself: that if his attentions to her were merely to amuse himself, she ought, without hesitation, to accept of Lord Wolverhampton, whose character was perfectly unexceptionable." She gave her daughter time

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to reason with herself, as she trusted a proper pride would lead her to resent such treatment. A few days elapsed, during every one of which the Duke had the same opportunities of seeing and conversing with her. She, nevertheless, tried to mortify him by little inattentions to what he said; and a marked civility, though rather distant, to his rival, ended in having the desired effect, so far as to bring him to lament to Mrs. Hazlewood, "that he was the most unfortunate of men in having involuntarily offended Miss Gleamurry." She pretended ignorance of what he alluded to, and requested an explanation. He said, "he had observed her conduct for some days past to be extremely changed towards him; that, on the preceding night she pointedly took the proffered hand of Lord Wolverhampton in preference to his, which had long been honoured with conducting her both into and out of her box." Mrs. Ha-

zlewood said, "she never understood, till that instant, that her daughter was responsible to his Grace for any of her actions; but if her leaning on another gentleman's arm disturbed his repose, his Grace knew his remedy." He looked confounded, and she turned the conversation; but the hope of receiving his visit the next morning vanished as the clock struck *five*, and in the evening their doubts were solved disagreeably, by hearing he was gone for Newmarket.

You may guess that the Mother's chagrin was almost as poignant as her Daughter's; her affection suffered much, but her pride more, in losing this noble alliance. She wisely spirited up her child to resent and revenge, by accepting Lord Wolverhampton's offers immediately. The poor girl was, however, so truly attached to this insinuating and ungenerous man, that the disappointment nearly cost her

life. The prudence of the Mother called the fever on her brain a sore throat; and as her recovery advanced, she urged, entreated, threatened, and urged again, till the Daughter assented, believing, as she says, that she was approaching her end very fast: she grew absolutely indifferent about *what* became of her. In three months she commenced a Wife, and from reviewing the wanton barbarity of the Duke in its true and impartial light, she felt no sentiment but abhorrence for him.

For three years she lived irreproachably, though surrounded by all her dissipated Husband's dissipated acquaintance, when the Duke again disturbed her repose, by daily pursuing her at a distance, and practising the same languishing airs he had formerly used. She felt a secret satisfactory kind of triumph at seeing him suffer for his unpardonable conduct toward her, but resolved to adhere scrupulously to pro-

priety, and afford him no pretext to imagine his endeavours would ever rekindle a flame she had struggled to suppress.

But all these symptoms of indifference only served to strengthen the Duke's resolves to awaken a new interest in her bosom: he was indefatigable, and assisted by the infamous Lady Hellendale, (whose character was not known at the time) succeeded so far as to have a letter conveyed to her, which she had spirit to burn before the woman's face; but time, industry, and the corruption of her Abigail, at length brought her to read *one* letter, from which unfortunate victory she dates her ruin. He there told her, "that the language her imperious Mother had used when he meant to open his heart to her, was such as no gentleman could bear; that in the moment of passion he quitted town, but that he struggled to forget the parent's unkindness, because

she was the Mother of his adored Julia, and proposed returning in the week : but illness, from extreme vexation, confined him in the country for near a month, when he had the cruel mortification of learning from good authority that she was shortly to be united to Lord Wolverhampton." This was the substance, but so artfully expressed, and accompanied with so many regrets and despairs, that she began to believe Lady Hellendale's assertion, that he was certainly going into a galloping consumption.

After this intelligence she thought it could not be criminal to turn her eyes towards him the first opportunity that offered, which she did not wait long for. A sale at Christie's, of china and jewels, led her to Pall-Mall, and her infamous friend, Lady Hellendale, conveyed the information to the Duke, who affected the utmost surprise and agitation. The absence of her Husband

encouraged him to make the most respectful bow, when a return from her emboldened him to speak. Thus defeated were all the wise resolutions she had for awhile laboured to strengthen: he pleaded his exalted passion with such eloquence, accompanied by such protestations of dying unless she allowed him to hope, that dreading least they should be noticed, she promised him a meeting in Kensington Gardens on the following morning. When the evening of this unfortunate day allowed her leisure for reflection, she was overwhelmed with confusion at what she had done, proving how difficult it is to root up good sentiments which are the natural growth of the soil, and to extinguish the love of virtue, which habit and inclination have conspired alike to endear to us. Distracted with conflicting thoughts, she sent to Lady Hellendale, to whom she opened her grief, and besought her to acquaint the Duke with her sentiments—that she

was distressed to a degree at the accidental meeting at Christie's, and determined to avoid a repetition of it. This lady laughed at her cowardice, and ridiculed her fears of detection. She told her the Serpentine River was too near the spot of appointment, to venture the communication of such intelligence to the Duke; but that she would secure Lady Wolverhampton from any danger of being discovered, and enable her in this meeting to get handsomely quit of any further engagement. Against her better knowledge she went, accompanied by Lady Helledale, where they found his Grace almost in despair at their tardiness. He condemned himself with such severity for purchasing this conversation at the expence of her peace, and shed so many crocodile tears, that her resentment for the past treatment were lulled to rest, and in a short time after she fell a prey to seduction. Detection, and a consequent divorce, followed.

Soon after the divorce was obtained, this *honourable* man offered her a settlement of a thousand a year for life if she would live with him, which she refused, and retired into the country, unknowing and unknown, except to her never-failing friend, Lady Lucy Saville, whose amiable conduct, had she been abandoned, most probably would have reclaimed her. How unceasing have her attempts been to restore this unhappy woman to her own good opinions! her sincere repentance, mortification, and remorse, are proved by her voluntary seclusion from the world, and refusal of substantial favours from her friend.

About two years ago the Duke found out her abode, and sent her a bond for five thousand pounds, which she also refused, saying that her small income afforded her more comforts than she could enjoy. Soon after her Aunt left her an annuity of five hundred a year,

which she lays by for the use of a natural daughter of Lord Wolverhampton, to prove the sincerity of her contrition. She has lived here, I mean in this county, ever since, which is three years, and till last week was never tempted to quit her little cottage. Lady Lucy has been the most affectionate and soothing friend to her ; her attentions may in time reconcile this unhappy child of error to herself, which is a more difficult task to accomplish than the reconciliation of the world. She is now beautiful, but so pale and fragile, that her friend says she reminds her of the unsubstantial Euridice Orpheus is conducting from Hell—I do not recollect the print.

If I am not sufficiently accomplished to write a novel for a Circulating Library, I am greatly mistaken. I told you I had a horrid talent at narration ; and I doubt not you will agree with me. I did not think myself such

an abominable gossip. You will, I know, my dear girl, find an apology for me; if I have taken you half an hour from *yourself*, I am repaid in the coin I write for. I shall take a bed at Sir James's, as the workmen would disturb me too early in the morning, and your good Guardian told me he would forbid me to see you the next time I got to town, if I did not make Grosvenor-Square my hotel. Say every thing affectionate for me to him, and make my compliments to the young ladies and Sir Frederick Hambledon. My Husband has amused himself immoderately at poor Maria's folly. I knew a very handsome girl who is now quite an object, by drinking vinegar and acids of all sorts. About seven, I shall be in town; till then adieu, my dearest Caroline: believe me truly your friend,

M. ALCONDALE.

LETTER LV.

FROM MISS MARIA SAVILLE TO LADY LUCY
SAVILLE.

MY DEAREST LUCY,

I AM now sitting up in my bed, where I have been confined these six days with the most painful disorder poor mortal was ever afflicted with. My whole face is so swelled and covered with rash, that I can scarcely look out of my eyes, and my spirits are so low, that I have prevailed upon Nurse to let me have pen, ink, and paper, to write to you, and entreat you to come and spend a few days with your poor Maria. The physicians have forbid me to have any light ; but this good natured woman not only lets me write, though she promised she would keep me in total darkness, but says she will

carry any letters I chuse to trust her with. If you, my dear Cousin, had but an idea of what I now suffer in my face, by trying cosmetics, you would never use one as long as you live. You will be shocked to hear that I am grown quite thin, more like a shadow than you can conceive, and lost my colour entirely. Dr. Hubertson says he shall be able in a few days to decide whether I may stay at home or prepare for Lisbon. I am more mad at myself than I can say, for my own folly is the whole cause of my suffering and confinement. But even this is not *all* my vexation. Papa has ordered poor Jones out of the house, for buying me acids unknown to the family, which grieves me beyond measure, as she used to endeavour to dissuade me from taking lemons on an empty stomach, and often told me I should lose all my colour, which argument would have prevailed, had rouge been less in fashion ; but natural colour is now too vulgar, you

know, to appear in; so I thought the loss a matter of no consequence. But I have a piece of news to give you, which I have known these three hours. Caroline Clarendon is to be married to Sir Frederick Hambledon; Lord and Lady Alcondale are here, and every thing is settled, and writings are to be drawn up immediately, though the wedding does not take place till the twelfth of December, a day my Father fixed upon as being the anniversary of his own marriage, which he always speaks of as the most fortunate hour of his whole life. You may be sure it met with no opposition from Caroline, though I dare say she thinks it a long while to wait, for so superstitious a caprice of Papa.

Mother Mortimer is to go to Portsmouth for Sophia the instant the news comes to the India House; she and the old quiz, her Husband, are both below, and Sir Frederick is transported at his

good fortune ; for, you know, she will have plenty of chink—the more is my sorrow. I cannot discover, by hook or by crook, whose overtures Fanny has rejected. It is a Lord's, and I wonder at her ; for Mr. Beaumont has only fifteen hundred a year—absolute poverty, in my mind !

My dear creature will pity me, I am sure, when I tell her there has been company every day, and I unfit to be of the parties ; I cannot help crying, though it almost flees my face alive. I am forbid to eat any thing but plain bread pudding, without butter, though I am dying with hunger. My dear Jones has brought me a slice of ham, unknown to any body : she is forbid the house, but at dinner time she is certain of not being seen—she has brought the most amiable letter from Lady Staffordson that ever was written, who assures me that she submits to the most unjust and injurious suspicions about

the crescent, out of real affection to me ; that she is incapable of doing an ungenteel thing, much more a dishonourable one, for any advantage whatever ; but that she forebore to clear herself out of pity to me, for Papa looked so severe (she says) she quite trembled for me ; and from that moment determined to bear the odium of having done a bad action, sooner than afflict and distress her beloved friend Maria. Dear woman ! I quite love her—this is pure friendship, I am sure, or I do not know what is : I got Jones to take her the kindest thanks I had to offer. All this family is so violently set against her, that I know I shall never be suffered to visit her publicly till I am married ; for, between ourselves, no Husband shall controul me as a Father does.

Caroline is not to go with Mother Mortimer to fetch Sophia ; Papa thinks it will agitate her spirits too much. I

have entreated Fanny not to let the stranger come into my room while I am such a horrid fright: she might write to her friends, you know, that Fanny was handsomest, and that would be too provoking. I had rather she staid in the house a month unseen, than exhibit myself just now. Indeed, dear Lucy, you would not know your poor Maria, she is so shockingly altered.

I have half killed my eyes with writing, so adieu ; I must pop down in bed, for I hear Caroline and Fanny coming up stairs.

They are gone down again. It is all true: Caroline told me I must get well, to be one of her bride maids—one wedding makes another, you know, my dear. In sliding the ink in bed, I spilt it, and sadly fear this letter will scarcely be legible. You never told me that infamous woman's story. I

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mean Mrs. Glenmurry; for I do assure you both Lady Hellendale and Lady Staffordson say they should feel contamination in such a creature's society. Do not you visit her again, my dear Cousin; I hear her abused every where. I am, dear Cousin, your very affectionate Cousin,

MARIA SAVILLE.

LETTER LVI.

LADY ALCONDALE TO MISS CAROLINE CLAR-
RENDON.

Grosvenor-Square.

FOR fear my dear Caroline has not seen the morning paper we take in, I enclose it immediately to you : read the ship-news, and accept our cordial congratulations on its contents. May the future, my dear girl, be marked with *white*, for the past has been years of agitation and sorrow ! Your amiable conduct in this last affair has convinced me that your friends will always be justified for the unbounded partiality they feel for you at all times. Lord Alcondale is in raptures with you for what you said on the subject of jewels, settlement, and equipage : he has been gossiping all the morning

with his Mother and old Mrs. Saville, who are alike rejoiced at Sir Frederick's good fortune. The former bids me tell you she had thoughts of taking him herself ; but as he has astonished her by giving you the preference, she shall certainly continue single.

The groom is ready to go, so I conclude with the most unaffected good wishes for my dear girl. May she reap the reward she so richly deserves, for a conduct which receives the approbation of all who know her ! My prophetic heart tells me my wishes will be realized. Adieu ! ever your's sincerely,

M. ALCONDALE.

LETTER LVII.

SIR FREDERICK HAMBLETON TO LORD TRE-
COURCY, DUBLIN.

Berkley-Square.

IN the absence of my dear Caroline, who has named a day to make me the happiest of men, I write to let my friend participate in my joys, for I will own to you that I have reproached myself for being master of such intelligence for a week, without communicating it to dear Trecourcy; but you know

“All other things give place,
When once a Lady’s in the case.”

Since this adored girl has blessed me with assenting to my prayer, she is become a new being. She seems anxious to learn my sentiments, opinions, and

habits ; but this is a remark of Sir James Saville's, who mentioned it as a new subject for admiration. Her absence and reserve, which I once complained to you of, seem done away. I had my doubts and fears that she was indifferent to me ; but since this blessed moment all, all my cares are vanished ! yet her nature seems so placid, that joy scarcely elevates her : she destroys your *infallible* hypothesis, that all passions are accompanied with their opposites. Indeed I have myself observed, that men who love to excess, hate in the same proportion ; that the bosom which magnifies benefits, resents ingratitude in the same degree ; that the breast where friendship fixed her throne, can become the seat of the most bitter hatred ; and so on, *toties quoties* : but my angel is the very soul of sensibility for other people's miseries, without being visibly delighted with their joys. May the second week in December find you in England, and

disposed to take the office of bride-man upon you ! Remember my bliss would be incomplete without your presence ; you must positively order every thing to tend to this point. My charmer approved of my intention to ask you, this morning, and told me I was a sad correspondent, she feared, for Lord Tre-courcy's servant had been to enquire whether I was abroad. I explained to her my intention of going to Paris, had she confirmed my misery instead of my happiness. I am, Tre-courcy, supremely happy ! I promise myself a lasting friend, an agreeable companion, and, if God pleases to spare each for the other, a calm and tranquil old age. The advantage of living in the same house, seeing her temper and disposition in all situations, is of the first kind. I know I have worn no disguise before her, and I am confident she has been equally natural. What have I then to dread ?

Such a subject alone could keep me from telling you an event of so extraordinary a nature, that it would be hissed at as *improbability* in a modern novel ; it is, however, fact. The Sister my Caroline has expected so long is Sophia Irwin (*Clarendon*) ; but the latter name neither Irwin nor his wife ever mentioned : the girl even called her Mamma, and confirmed my idea of her being one of his little indiscretions, as this Mamma once said in my hearing, that she never had had a child. Form, if you can, an adequate idea of my surprise and astonishment at hearing a letter read from this identical jilt Sophia, acknowledging that she is under the protection of her antiquated lover, Parkinson and his Sister, and bespeaking a friendly reception from Caroline for the weighty Nabob !

“ Let the galled jade wince,
My withers are unwrung.”

So far from feeling one unpleasant sensation at the idea of beholding her, I an-

ticipate it with the determination of appearing as happy and delighted as I am ; but I do imagine she will be embarrassed at beholding a man she has treated so infamously stand in such a situation to her Sister. If murder will out, it shall be through her, not me ; for I never mean to allude, either in public or private, to our former acquaintance ; but shall observe the most perfect well-bred indifference I can assume. I shall half enjoy her surprise ; but her mercenary, selfish little heart will be comforted for the disproportion of years by the abundance of cash. I will tell you at my first leisure of our curious interview. I hope the lover may come to heighten the scene. I wish Sheridan would bring it on the stage, with all my soul !

Hére has been glorious doings ! Lady Staffordson has been the heroine of Bow-street. The advertisement about three

months ago of a certain Countess was about this miraculous dame of quality, and for the honour of woman, I am sorry to say it is truly described. But pardon me, I will not make any comments upon the fair friend of the noble Lord Trecourcy, but proceed to amuse him with some secret anecdotes of a fair friend of my own. My dear little sprightly devil of a romp is now doing penance in her bed with a surfeit, which has dérangé my features almost as much as her own cosmetics have effected this change in *hers*—laughter in *mine* at discovering the regimen she has observed to procure a thin, sleek, delicate shape and skin. Three lemons fasting, cream of tartar, and vinegar, have totally ruined a constitution otherwise good, and covered her face with the most forbidden irruption imaginable; the latter may disappear, but the health will never be regained. I am told by her Father

she is really an object, for I have not seen her: this is folly more than badness. Now to badness more than folly. She is mean enough to carry on a secret correspondence with Lady Staffordson since the Bow-street affair, which I discovered a few nights ago by accident. Upon enquiring for my servant, I was answered he was out. I waited and waited till I grew provoked, as I meant to see the last dance at the Opera before I went to the Prince's supper. At his return, I asked him where he had been so unseasonably? He replied, to carry a letter to Lady Staffordson's, in Bedford-square, Mrs. Jones having asked him to deliver it, as she was afraid Sir James Saville would find out that she was protected by her kind young lady. I forbid the man ever to carry a second, and as her confinement prevented my speaking to her, I was obliged to confide in my charmer, under promise of

secrecy, to magnify to Maria the impropriety of her conduct, and to tell her that, as her sincere friend, I should inform her Father, if she ever directly or indirectly had intercourse with Lady Staffordson. Caroline only conveyed this gently to her at present, for she dreaded least a tear should give anguish to her unfortunate face. The girl, however, promised Caroline not to write. I should let this wonderful girl follow her own ways, if I did not owe every friendly exertion to save her, as a debt due to her excellent Father.

How I long to bring you acquainted with Lord and Lady Alcondale ! The latter is warmly attached to your Lancashire witch, and with reason, for she is a very estimable girl. I own I think your eight and her four hundred a year would, with prudence, enable you to make a very decent appearance,

should your Father close his purse-strings. You say it would not be living in stile to dwell with her Aunt ! Are you still such a lover of fashion as to sacrifice your happiness at the shrine of the phantom ? If you are, I only pity you. Your fair one gave a better reason for delay ; she told Lady Alcondale that she would wait for a dozen years, sooner than involve you before you came to the estate. If a family came, we should be tempted to anticipate, and my ambition will be to keep my Husband out of debt ; it is so laudable a one that I have nothing to say in defence of my first opinion. Anticipation of income is the great leviathan.

Charles Seymour is smitten by the skittish little Maria, and has received Sir James Saville's permission to wait upon his fair daughter ; but her beauty has suffered such damage, that he may

possibly be cured *when the candles enter*. She is ignorant of his intentions at present, for she would certainly fret double tides; and the lover is unacquainted with the source of her confinement and effects of her folly. They are, I understand, as opposite as the poles in their dispositions; but we must all take our chance. If the young lady accepts him, he will rue her condescension before the expiration of the honey-moon, or I am hugely mistaken.

Our politics are the same with regard to the cause of the French Revolution, but we differ quite in the consequences. I cannot believe that order can arise from such a mass of confusion. Some great stroke must be struck, I do not pretend to say how or where; but I am persuaded confidence, laws, and commerce, can never exist with such a set of governors, who must

first be removed from their seats in the National Assembly to their original and proper ones behind their counters. I expect their levelling principles will loosen the bonds of social order wherever they penetrate.

I dined a few days ago with old General Belgrave, at Lord Alcondale's; he applauded your Worship's maiden speech, which all the papers have copied from the Dublin Journal. When I claimed some distant acquaintance with you, he said, "Sir, remember my words, that man will be an ornament to his country." He knew of your Father's avarice toward you, and condemned him accordingly over a bottle, which he loves to idolatry.

After our guest had departed, I remarked to Lady Alcondale, that her friend the General was a confounded hypocrite if he was not the most amiable benevolent creature, in all situa-

tions, that ever existed. Both Husband and Wife advised me to doubt my judgment in physiognomy for the future, for that he behaved like a tyrant and monster to his only son, a most worthy, accomplished man, who is now abroad. I shrugged up my shoulders, but am more grieved than mortified at my first opinion, as I verily believe Lavater himself had made the same decision which I did.

You give a most superb account of the vice Queen's magnificent ball as surpassing every thing of the kind! Could I condescend to *describe*, I could match it with one lately given at Alcondale-Park, which really reminded me of the Arabian Nights Entertainments. It was quite an enchantment, the rooms were all illuminated (the supper-room excepted) with variegated lamps, the festoons composed of corn flowers, wheat ears, rose campion, and artificial flowers of all kinds, which

was the most elegant mixture I ever beheld, and the design of the lady of the mansion. Minuets, cotillions, and country-dances were interrupted at one, for a most splendid supper, served up upon plate, (but all these splendid suppers are alike); nevertheless, I never saw any surpass the present. Just here I recollected a promise which had been half extorted from me by the sweet boy, Lord Alcondale's only child, to let him see the supper: without saying a word, I got his nurse to wrap him up in a long cloak of his Mother's, strip off his night-cap, and, to the surprise of the company, I returned to the saloon with Lord Barycourt in my arms, whose joy and ecstasy were so unbounded, that I was amply repaid. After a piece of blanc-manger and a tea-spoon-full of Cape, he made his exit with eclat, for a truer Stentorian roar was never brought forth. Remember my injunctions about the twelfth of

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December, and disobey them at your peril.

Given under my hand this seventh day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety-one, FREDERICK HAMBLETON, who is truly and affectionately yours.

Vale! Vale!

LETTER LVIII.

FROM MISS CAROLINE CLARENDON TO LADY
ALCONDALE.

Grosvenor-Square.

MY Aunt and Sophia are arrived.—
My dear friend, rejoice with me, for I
mean to kill the fatted calf. Mrs.
Mortimer and I have persuaded her to
go to bed, as she seems quite spent
with fatigue and agitation. She ex-
hausted herself in the journey, for her
spirits were excessively high: however,
a good night's rest will restore them
to their usual tone. My grateful heart
renders its unfeigned thanks to God
for restoring my loved charge to my
arms, and enabling me to acquit my-
self of a promise I made to my dear
departed Parent, when I scarcely knew
what a promise signified. I know you
will be impatient, so I write this
pigmy letter. I am going to make

her tea by her bedside. Pray, pray, come soon, for I long to shew my dearest Sister to my dearest friend !

Sir Frederick Hambledon desires me to add his affectionate love to my own, and I anticipate the necessity of obeying him, by complying with this request. I am better in health than I have been for some months. Doubt is more harrassing than any thing I know, it never lets one rest. Now I have resolved, I endeavour to make the best of it, and drive every reverted thought from my mind. Adieu, my dearest Lady Alcondale ! Believe me ever your obliged

CAROLINE CLARENDON,

LETTER LIX.

FROM MISS SOPHIA CLARENDON TO MRS.
IRWIN, BENGAL.

MY dearest ever valued friend has by this time retraced the many weary leagues we sailed together, and is, I trust in God, rejoicing in dear Mr. Irwin's perfect recovery at this very moment. Would to Heaven I was with you in case of a different event! which Captain Detterville taught me to dread. Who has power or inclination to sooth my maternal friend superior to Sophia? Who has such a right to nurse and attend her? Did my anxieties, my prayers avail, my dear Mrs. Irwin, she would benefit by those I feel, and put up to Heaven for the restoration of her Husband, her health, and peace of mind.

The earnest entreaty you made me, and the promise you exacted from me, to relate every circumstance which affected me in a situation so far remote from a friend dearer to me than every other I have in the world, makes me begin thus soon to awaken your concern for me. I almost doubt whether I ought to obey you, and reproach myself for unburthening my own sorrows in your benevolent bosom. Oh! my friend, your unhappy *élève* can never know peace again! can never hope to forget her anguish of soul but in the grave! May the incessant agitation I suffer at the event I am about to relate, release me soon!

But I must begin from my arrival in England, to make you comprehend me: I must tell you that this happened on the seventh of November, after beating about in the Channel for eleven days, which made me extremely sick, for the first time since I left the

Cape. At Portsmouth I was disappointed at not meeting Caroline, but delighted to hear from my Aunt, who alone came to receive me, that Caroline was shortly to be married to a most amiable man, a Baronet with seven thousand a year, the Ward of Sir James Saville; and that her Guardian and Caroline equally approved it. She added, that an early day in December was fixed upon for the union, and that Sir Frederick Hambledon had nobly made his loved Caroline's Sister a present of ten thousand pounds, without any power of guardianship over it, and that Sir James had placed it in the funds for *my* use. Mrs. Mortimer related the sad scene of my Mother's death to me, and her request to Caroline to protect me under her own roof, and to stipulate this condition in her marriage articles, conjuring her at the same time to reject the lover who would not accede to these conditions. My Sister called Heaven to witness

that she would obey the injunctions of her beloved Parent, sealing the vow with an address to God, to bless *her* in proportion as she fulfilled the promise. My poor Mother faintly articulated an amen, and the inevitable moment was past.

My Aunt regretted that my Mother had not divided her jewels between her two daughters, as they are worth eleven thousand pounds. I said, that from the idea Mrs. Irwin had given me of my dear Mother's disposition and sense, I had little doubt of her acting wisely in doing as she did. She could not really know the temper and heart of a child of three years old, while one of nine enabled her to decide what it would turn out to be at a maturer age. I could never imagine that either Parent designed to injure a child who could not have offended them, and therefore I only lamented the peculiarity of *my* fate,

not *their* conduct. Indeed, my dear friend, I do suppose my Mother's bequest of her jewels to Caroline was in consequence of a perfect knowledge of her heart, that she believed my Sister would divide them as she has done, and that my attachment to her would derive new force from this act of generosity. Surely dependance on such a Sister would assume the mildest form; and the reciprocal affection which would arise between the benefactress and the *obliged*, would rivet the bands of sororal attachment with additional strength.

I reminded Mrs. Mortimer of Caroline's bounty to me yearly, and her wish to place me at the first school as a parlour-boarder, if your affection for me had been less strong, and suffered me to quit Bengal. She told me my Sister was without exception the most amiable girl that ever existed, that she was adored by her Guardian and all her intimate friends; in short,

she assured me, I was a very enviable creature in having such a connection.

You will be astonished, my dearest Madam, at the confession I am now making to you; but from you I have no disguises (how am I punished for the only one I ever had!) My heart at this instant felt callous to all the finer sensations, which Sir Frederick Hambleton's generous gift and Caroline's good qualities, amiable character, and approaching felicity, were calculated to call forth. The idea of embracing my new found Sister did not give me the fond ecstasy I used to feel when anticipating with you the very moment of meeting; my affectionate heart at *that* time yearned to embrace my Sister, it *it* shrunk *now* within itself. I blushed at myself, I enquired of that *self* for the unaccountable motives which I could not define. I concluded that the bare idea of dependance warped my proud heart from its former bias,

and believed that a haughty spirit made me averse to receive an obligation, when I was conscious the return must ever be out of my power. I was shocked at myself for this unaccountable *more* than indifference, but the thing was inexplicable, and rigorously condemning myself for this unamiable though involuntary lethargy of affection, I arrived at her door, and had a solution of the mystery when she presented her future Husband to me as my elected Brother. What were my emotions at beholding the faithless perjured Fitz Charles? Overpowered with embarrassment, surprise, and fatigue united, I fainted away. Caroline imagined my extreme agitation arose from meeting with her; but alas! I was scarcely sensible that I was embracing a Sister, while the man who had so often solicited my *love* stood by her as my Brother. Caroline stepped to a distant window, to throw it open for air, during which time I said, "Bro-

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ther, you have nothing to apprehend from a *Sister*."

He is looking more elegant than ever, and his health and spirits seem to be improved in proportion; he appears to be warmly attached to Caroline, who, I sadly fear, still remembers Belgrave: a kind of languor hangs over her, and though she exerts herself the moment she is conscious of it, yet I think her good spirits are a little artificial. As to Sir Frederick, he is as happy, I really believe, as possible; he takes care to let it be visible, for he is the life of the family; he generally comes at ten in the morning, stays till one, when he accompanies my Sister and Co. every where, both visits and shopping; at four he quits her to dress for dinner at half past five, and departs again at twelve. He is only distantly polite to *me*, never has once enquired after you, or mentioned India; so that I am convinced he is

ashamed to look back to the past, and keeps his voyage to Bengal a profound secret. I shall not betray him. In the course of this evening he was making violent love to Caroline, and saying, "he wished to God he had the power of looking into her heart, for he knew no woman ever attained the age of twenty without being in love." "How unfair," answered she, "for if that had been the case, my living single would tell you I was slighted." "Slighted by a gentleman!" said he, "oh you, ignoramus! the ladies make a monopoly of slights." How insulting a speech for me to hear! she told him "he flirted very prettily with old Lady Alcondale, indeed she now believed he was a professed flirt, though formerly she never gave herself the trouble of finding out his failings." "If you found out a thousand faults, you would not have discovered one I am more given to," said he; "but though I have amused myself with frequent

flirtations, I truly, seriously, and solemnly declare, I never was so far in love as to be miserable at a woman's unkindness. Could my Caroline be unjust, she would revenge the stoic indifference I have hitherto felt for their frowns." I expect you to harbour some doubts of my veracity almost. Had I contradicted him with my eyes even, he ought to have retired abashed. His manner is so strangely altered, his heart so perverted, that I scarcely know him again. These ungenerous, insulting triumphs over a poor girl, who acknowledged a mutual regard for him, and whose imprudence in doing so he ought to be the *last* to censure, is pitiful and unmanly.

I have already been introduced to several of Caroline's friends, who came to wait on me after the second day of rest; but Heaven knows how irksome those visitors are to me at such a time,

when my anxiety for you alone overwhelms me almost, without the additional load I have to bear from this ungenerous man! Injure me not, my dearest ever valued friend, by supposing I still harbour one tender sentiment for him; I am indeed deceived if I do—scorn occupying that heart which once acknowledged to you the insufferable weakness of loving him. The assuming, as he did then, a fictitious name, degrades him sufficiently in my estimation, believe me.

When I reflect upon the months which must elapse before this reaches your hands, I feel a despondency creep over my frame. What have I to go through? What an awful ceremony am I called upon to witness! Heaven will, I trust, dispose my heart to acquiesce with its decrees! yet fears for the future fate of my Sister make me devoutly wish she had been destined to make poor Belgrave happy: he is now abroad,

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to avoid a very great alliance which his Father is solicitous to bring about, but which this amiable man is averse to. I am unfortunate enough to discover new beauty in Milton's description of unsuccessful love, from a consciousness of its truth.

' For either
He *never* shall find out fit mate but such
As some misfortune brings him, or mistake ;
Or whom he wishes *most*, shall seldom gain,
Through her perverseness ; but shall see her
gain'd
By a far worse ; or if she love, withheld
By parents ; or his happiest choice *too late*
Shall meet, *already* link'd and wedlock bound
To a fell adversary—his hate, or shame :
Which infinite calamity shall cause
To human life, and household peace confound.'

This letter is the earnest of those weekly tasks you set your poor forlorn one. I have some consolation in believing that you know my daily employment of adding a few lines to my limited sheet of paper. When I lay

down to rest my prayers are for you, and my wishes accompany them, that a friendly dream may deceive me, by making you and my dear Mentor present to their affectionate child. Ah! sweet illusion; possess me! effect a forgetfulness of realities, and enable me, when I awaken, to say, "My God, not my will, but *thine* be done!"

Adieu, loved parent, friend! My fears counteract my hopes for my Mentor. Adieu, and believe me truly your affectionate and dutiful God-daughter,

SOPHIA IRWIN CLARENDON.

LETTER LX.

FROM LADY ALCONDALE TO MISS CAROLINE
CLARENDON.

Alcondale-Park.

NEVER was any thing so mal-a-propos as the visit of these foreigners at such a moment, when I am as impatient as you can possibly be to have you present your Sister to me. I thought I had contrived every thing so cleverly for this purpose, that there was no danger of disappointment, not apprehending any from this quarter: however, I brought it upon myself; for when I made the first invitation to them, a pre-engagement in Buckinghamshire prevented its being accepted, and I gave them permission to chuse any part of this month, and they believed me sincere when I mentioned the pleasure it would afford me to

have them guests, which I truly am, though I regret that it takes place this week. A recollection of the attentions I received from their connections in France gives new strength to the desire we have to make England agreeable to them. This day we spend at Winchcomb-Abbey ; to morrow at Errington-Park ; and on Thursday we dine at the Bamboroughs, and partake of their theatrical amusements ; the next we receive company. The servant who carries this, carries half a hundred invitations, and amongst the rest to Sir James, yourself, and all his *appendages*, to come down and share the day with us. Make my apologies to your Sister for the apparent rudeness in not purchasing this pleasure by a personal request ; but, I trust, the above statement will procure me her pardon.

I am afraid Miss Maria Saville is yet unable to be of the party : my house-

keeper tells me that she drank almost plain lemon during the dance, which, I suppose, brought it out so rapidly all over her face. Between ourselves, Charles Seymour deserves a wiser partner for life ; but he is resolved to pay his devoirs to this mad-cap. I sincerely wish it may bring about a change in her disposition attended with good. I have no leisure to add any thing but my most affectionate love to my very dear Caroline, sincerely your's,

M. ALCONDALE.

LETTER LXI.

FROM MISS CAROLINE CLARENDON TO LADY
ALCONDALE.

Grosvenor-Square.

THERE is certainly a spell, my dear Lady Alcondale, against our meeting, for every day in the ensuing week is taken up already with engagements: the particular Wednesday you ask us for is destined to receive a home party, and the weather is so extremely severe just now, that I cannot venture to promise any future day for the pleasure of visiting Alcondale-Park. Sophia longs very sincerely to be introduced to you, and laments the impossibility of effecting this at present.

It grieves me to discover in my Sister a reserve which I did not expect, and an extreme dejection which I can-

not account for, as there are particular moments when it wholly disappears, returning again with added force, as if she imagined it to be criminal to smile. I cannot express the disappointment this is to me, because I was taught to expect the most lively, animated, cheerful companion in my Sister. This day she is Melancholy personified. Could I but extract the cause of her being a prey to it, I would attempt to remove it; but I remain in perfect ignorance of what it can arise from. I began several conversations with her this morning about my approaching change of situation, in order to turn her thoughts to agreeable subjects, though, God knows, they are not so to me; but I rather increased than diminished her depression, which made me acquaint her with my fears that she had left an attachment behind her, assuring her that my happiness was only to be found in forming her's. Her tears convinced

me my conjectures have a foundation, but the reserve I complain of prevented Sophia from confiding in me. I felt mortified. After a burst of tears, she protested that she hated the sex. She did this with such vehemence, that I am persuaded one man has caused her hatred to *all*. I repeated every affectionate exertion I could make to procure her the accomplishment of her wishes ; she might depend upon it at all times. She half bowed, but scarcely shewed any obligation for the interest I took in her welfare. As to her person it is exquisitely beautiful, and her countenance really beyond my description. A few mornings ago she went with Miss Saville and me into the square, and I never beheld such a gaze as she attracted. The next day, when we repeated our walk, we saw the best part of our neighbours turn out to walk also, professedly for a view of her. She is apparently unconscious of her attractions, which is a new motive for

admiration. To me, however, who seek acquaintance with her heart, she appears to possess a mind inadequate to it—a cold, unconciliating, reserved disposition, which promises a weak harvest. I hope I see every thing rather stronger than I ought to do. One of the April gaieties came over her last night: the gentlemen were out, and a party of ladies, together with Mr. Beaumont and Mr. Seymour, came to tea. Here she surprised me, for her vivacity was equal to Maria Saville's: she was describing her voyage throughout with so much humour, that she kept us all in a laugh. Captain Beaumont, you know, affects a universal knowledge of every thing. Before his flame, Miss Saville, he thought this a good opportunity of displaying his powers; he asked her some particulars about the police, the government, and the courts of law at Bengal; that no other man would ever have thought of putting to a girl of nine.

teen, which she, nevertheless, satisfied him perfectly upon. She perceived that I felt pleased at seeing her so uncommonly amiable. After a time she appeared perfectly exhausted, which I regretted, as our beaux returned home.

She is the most beautiful representative of my Mother, as far as I can judge from the portrait and miniature I have of her. By the bye, Humphreys is taking mine for Sir Frederick, and it promises to be a better likeness than that I formerly sat for, to bestow on a different person. I am ill at peace with myself for suffering Belgrave to retain it; but you know how earnestly I intreated him to return it, though without effect. I had determined to bring one I have so long been accustomed to wear next my heart to you, to keep till you had an opportunity of giving it again into Captain Belgrave's hands. I found the doing this would bring a

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conversation on between you and me, which it is wiser to avoid, and I now enclose it to you, my dear friend : for, since unrelenting Fate dooms me to be the wife of another, I will seek to engage Sir Frederick's affections, and to return them, which this dear memento of a former passion obstructs. I know you will applaud this step, and believe that I am earnest in resolving that the wife of Sir Frederick shall never dare confess, even to her own heart, that she loves another. His goodness of heart is more conspicuous every day. Sophia seems by no means to take cordially to him, which he has sense to see, but prudence to take no notice of. She bears little part in any conversation he holds with me, which is inattentive, and very unamiable to me as well as to him. I must release you to dress, as I make it a rule never to keep any body waiting, which principle I wish was more universal in this family; for my patience is

often exhausted by Maria, who thinks it a point of elegance to make a dinner wait a good hour for her arrival. I envy your foreigners a pleasure they have daily of enjoying the society of my dear friend. Believe me to remain ever truly your's,

CAROLINE CLARENDON.

LETTER LXII.

FROM MISS SOPHIA CLARENDON TO MRS.
IRWIN, AT BENGAL.

MY task reminds me of the Peruvian Quipos—I am, while in company and conversation, adding a new word to the link destined for the hands of my friend: my waking and sleeping thoughts are fixed upon you, and though I appear at times to enter upon other subjects, yet my heart has little share in any event not relative to Bengal. Condemn me, my dear Mrs. Irwin, with more lenity than I do myself. I know my dear friend ought to upbraid me with entering too deeply into the transient and unsubstantial things of this world---vain edeavour to throw off the attachment I unwillingly feel to some habits of my heart!--

Alas! I cannot, *cannot* conquer these propensities.

I have determined to take a step I know not how to set about: the dread of giving pain to Caroline, even poignant as it is, cannot withhold me. When I consider his gift of ten thousand pounds in the light of *compensation* for trifling thus inhumanly with my peace of mind, I own my bosom rises with indignation, resentment, and contempt at such an insult to my feelings! Does he—can he think it possible I should accept a favour from a man who has so wantonly embittered my life? I will not. Abject and despicable must I be in my own eyes, could I submit to a silent acquiescence, even with the view of preserving Caroline's peace. Charming reflection! that the miserable and happy come to the end of each hour at the same moment, the length or brevity is the illusion of the senses, for in fact they are the same. Caro-

line is very amiable, which, when I give an involuntary pang to her heart, adds to my regret. Sir Frederick Hambledon's conduct to me is marked by the most cold, formal, half civilities imaginable. Mine to him is well bred, though very distant. Caroline yesterday quitted the room before I even missed her; he flung up the sash, and looked out of the window: at *her* return he shut it, with an apology; but he really forgot *I* was in the room. I felt my face glow at this polite designed forgetfulness.

The Parkinsons dined here yesterday, and accompanied us all to the Opera: to-morrow they go to the Pantheon with the same party. I never excuse myself, for I cannot be more unhappy in company than I am in private; and I escape observation and suspicion while I mix with the cheerful, which I should not do, if I sought retirement and solitude. Indeed I en-

joyed yesterday, for Mr. Parkinson and his Sister talked a great deal about you. I was inclined to nourish my despairs about my loved friends, when he cheered me, by saying, "Suppose now the medical tribe should send him to breathe his native air, and that one of the ships which were to follow Captain Deterville should have Mr. Irwin on board at this minute." Such a thing we think is neither unlikely or improbable. Pleasing as this new idea is to me, I replied, "it is transient, for, in that case, his valued wife would be still more pitiable than ever, for she would certainly miss him, as the European ships, which were to touch at the Cape, were to take her back to Bengal." I can scarcely drive this harrassing thought from my mind. This conversation ended, I was not a little astonished to hear Sir Frederick ask Mr. Parkinson about Mr. and Mrs. Frazer at the Cape, and say that he had spent his time very agreeably with

these worthy people. I now found that the whole party must be acquainted with his having served in India. He gave an account of his expedition against the Rajah, and I saw the information was not new to any other of the hearers. All this is too wonderful for me to unravel.

I am certain Mr. Parkinson is going to be married, foolishly, to some very young and handsome girl, for Sir Frederick glanced at it twenty times, till at last the poor man (whose meekness sometimes assumes the air of silliness) looked perfectly abashed, and made many serious protestations that he had no intention of altering his situation so late in the day. "My Brother," said he, "made an unfortunate marriage, and when he regained *his* liberty, he advised *me* never to lose *mine*; and where I have met a pair of eyes too brilliant for my repose, I have wisely taken my flight in time---in three days, young

ladies, I am obliged by you all to set out for the north. Heaven knows what would happen if I trusted myself longer in your society!"

Sir James said, that for his part, he was the first advocate for a suitable marriage; he had passed fifteen very happy years in the wedded state, and was now deriving real blessings from having entered into it. "My dear girls, and the protection I can with propriety afford two charming and amiable young women, are rewards of the first magnitude. Had the connection (like Mr. Parkinson's Brother) been unfortunate, these girls, and these privileges, would have more than made me amends."

I have just had an opportunity of talking with dear Caroline, who justly condemns my *apparent* conduct; but where the condemnation must come either from *my* heart or her's, there is

no alternative. My *own* approbation must be had of my *own* actions, in preference to the whole world's. I began with regretting the impossibility of accepting Sir Frederick Hambledon's donation of ten thousand pounds, consistent with my notions of right and wrong; and that I hoped she would not be hurt at my refusal of a present, which, I verily believed, no other man than Sir Frederick would have offered to my acceptance, (and God knows I thought so no reproach to any body.) She seemed quite surprised, and reasoned with me in a manner I should, in the same case, have done with her; she owned my conduct in this instance hurt her beyond expression. From a Brother there was neither impropriety nor degradation in accepting even a trifle, much more a liberal fortune; that she should consider herself as *ill used*, and cruelly treated by me, if I still persisted in refusing his present, or even mentioned to Sir James Saville

my intention of relinquishing it. When I saw my Sister's distress, and knew what she must feel, I had scarcely strength to contend longer; but recollecting *his* triumph, I acquired new fortitude, and bewailed in unfeigned sorrow the reluctance my mind felt to acquiesce with her wishes on this particular point. "With every thing else, my dear Caroline, I comply, except *this*, which is totally out of my power. My peace of mind would be the certain sacrifice. Call it pride, call it obstinacy, call it ingratitude, detestable as they are, I will sooner submit to be branded with those unmerited epithets than meet the reproach of my own bosom. No argument in the world can conquer my feelings, and therefore I repeat, I am deliberately *resolved* not to accept the present lodged in Sir James Saville's hands for my use." My Sister retired, with saying, "your disposition, Sophia, I fear, is an unhappy one: such conduct may be the means of cre-

ating a lasting breach between Sir Frederick Hambledon and your Sister."

Cruel, cruel necessity, which compels me to give pain to my kindest, generous, and feeling Caroline! Could the veil of mystery be drawn from her eyes, how would she applaud an action she now so rigorously condemns!--- My heart bleeds for her. Am I doing kindly, to fulfil my promise? Heaven in its mercy grant that the suffering part may be over before this arrives at your hands! My afflictions are too keen to last. Adieu, dearest, ever valued friend, and believe me ever truly your obliged and ever grateful God-daughter,

SOPHIA IRWIN CLARENDON.

LETTER LXIII.

LADY ALCONDALE TO MISS CAROLINE CLARE.
LONDON.

GRIEVED as I am at not having it in my power to see you either here or in London, yet I cannot be silent about the contents of your letter. I am quite out of patience with your sullen Sister. I beg your pardon, but I think her reserve so perfectly merits this epithet, that I could not avoid making use of it. Had she a just sense of your kindness to her in seeking her happiness as the foundation of your own, she would have frankly confessed that she *bad* a cause of sorrow, and told you how you could serve her. We have both talked over this unaccountable girl's strange behaviour, and are united in opinion, that the discontent rises from being de-

prived of her share of her Father's property; but her resentment ought not to be levelled at you; nor, had she a good heart, would it be levelled any where else. It is one of those unforeseen events which we may regret, but not blame. We, however, hope that a further acquaintance with Sophia's heart may do away the impressions we now feel at her ungrateful conduct. Sad indeed will your prospect be with so unpleasing a disposition as Sophia's to contend with!

My visitors wholly engage me, so I must release my dear friend sooner than I wish. All here join in love and good wishes with your sincere and affectionate friend,

M. ALCONDALE.

LETTER LXIV.

FROM SIR FREDERICK HAMBLEDON TO LORD
TRECOURCY.

I CANNOT let your books depart without adding a few lines, though I truly am little disposed to write to any body just now: my mind is the seat of doubt, fear, and suspicion, not of my Caroline, who is daily more dear to me, but of Sophia, whose conduct is inexplicable. Beyond the common necessary civilities, no conversation has ever passed between us: she appears to resent the victory I have gained over my attachment to her, and perfectly hates me, I verily believe. As to any union now with Parkinson, it is over—he is going to settle in Ireland, near his Sister, Lady Slater. I had glanced at his intended change of situation, when he gravely assured

us that he thought marriage at his time of life would be folly. These denials have little weight with me, as people often do the same in mixed parties, when they mean to be married next day. But I own I was startled after, when Sir James asked Sophia, "whether he was going to become Benedict?" The very suggestion was a surprize to me. She replied, "I never suspected a thought of this kind could ever enter his head; for Mr. Irwin used to try to persuade him to marry a widow, who seemed to like him; but he used to declare he would never part with his liberty."

I felt so restless and unsettled, that I called upon Parkinson to breakfast this morning, and alluded to our teaze of yesterday, adding, "that I had heard such a thing was in contemplation when I was at the Cape." He prayed me to tell him "who was the reported lady, for as he was a stranger to the intention, it would be charity to give him

some information." I then told him, that I had heard we were to become Brothers. "My God!" exclaimed he, "Brothers!—Grandfather and Grandchild you mean. Miss Sophia Clarendon, young, beautiful and amiable, marry an old fellow, who must be mad before ever he could have formed such an idea! This is news indeed! as Detterville tells me, that Mrs. Irwin conveyed a something to him, that a gentleman had left her for an immoderate long purse elsewhere. But I think she has got the better of her disappointment. She is the first woman in the kingdom for personal charms and mental endowments." I replied, "You forget she has a Sister." "No, no," said he, "I have not; she is next to her. But I cannot retract."

What am I to think? Sophia has turned the tables upon me. She preserves a haughty distance, which, had *she* been the injured person, would have

become her ; but not as the aggressor. She appears to have some struggles, which cost her dear ; but looks more exquisitely interesting than ever. Do advise me how to act. I mean to seize the first moment to converse with her for five minutes ; and to assure her that I *now* wish to forget her unkindness, and to commence her Brother with sincere affection, and warm interest in whatever concerns her. She has refused a present of some value from me *to the Sister of my dear Caroline*, for at the time I made it, I little thought who that Sister *was*, or, to be ingenuous, I should *not* have made it. I have not shewn the smallest chagrin at her returning it ; the consciousness of having behaved infamously to me prevents her acceptance of my gift—some sign of grace. My charming Caroline has distressed herself extremely at this part of Sophia's conduct, but I have made it as easy as I can to her. I do not blame the girl in my own mind.

All I now aim at, is to effect a sort of neutrality, which is wanting on both sides; for I will own I have taken opportunities of giving her cuts, that I knew she would comprehend the edge of: and again, I meet with studied slights from her. As we are to live in one house, this would be misery, and even without this motive for peace, it would be inhospitable in me to attempt a renewal of these ambiguous speeches.

I think your Bookseller has behaved very handsomely in the exchange; the profit to him is exceedingly moderate. The two Miss Savilles are gone to Harrowgate for a fortnight, previous to the twelfth of December, for Maria's face. I fear the simpleton will never recover her looks. This manœuvre has tamed Madam sufficiently; the tears are often in her eyes at the recollection of departed beauty. Charles Seymour is at Paris; so that the young lady is still a stranger to her conquest.

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You do not write regularly: you now are in my debt, and have not half the excuses of your friend. We are busied in house-hunting, and have seen several: one in Manchester-square, that we like much; but we can only have a lease for five years, which is an objection. We are going this morning to view another in Portland Place. These weighty matters engross me most pleasingly, and account to you for the short letters you get. At such a marked season of a man's life, be assured there is no one arrives without finding me
your very affectionate

FREDERICK HAMBLETON.

LETTER LXV.

FROM MISS SOPHIA CLARENDON TO
MRS. IRWIN, AT BENGAL.

WHEN I look at the two sheets of paper which I have already traced with my pen and my tears, I feel a despair lest they should never reach the hands of my maternal friend. Nothing in your absence seems worth my while to pursue; my heart feels sick of the world, and languishes for forgetfulness. But I fear I am not likely to acquire it; for a strange alteration in Sir Frederick Hambledon distresses me to death. This last week has been replete with wonders; and without any relaxation in my conduct whatever, he has converted the distant looks and sharp speeches he studied to make, to tender surveys and obliging atten-

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tions. I had a very unpleasant conversation with Sir James Saville on the subject of the ten thousand pounds. He professed himself astonished at my false ideas of humiliation, for he knew no other motive could sway me. But since I had assured him I should be wretched to accept such a present even from a Brother, he would undertake to acquaint Sir Frederick with my great obligations to him for so kind an intention, and my determination to decline it. I never was more disagreeably situated...for apparently I am unamiable, and unworthy of the kindness. At dinner, when I met Caroline and my intended Brother, I really felt very awkward, and my dear Sister could scarcely suppress her concern. Sir Frederick shewed no marks of resentment; his own conscience justified me, I doubt not, and when he requested Caroline to drink a glass of wine with him, he surprized me by adding,

"Sister Sophia perhaps will join us." I did so, and my Sister looked her approbation at him, and her obligation at me.

Next morning, about one o'clock, he was taken suddenly ill with a cramp in his stomach, owing to bad tea, he imagined, at Mr. Parkinson's. Ah at once I saw his whole forehead covered with drops of perspiration, and he appeared just fainting—so, pocketing all resentments, I ran down to the housekeeper's room for a little brandy, and he was well again in a quarter of an hour. He volunteered trifling attentions to me all day after, and I feel more comfortable; for since your absence and Mr. Mortimer's odd temper leave me no chance of another asylum, I must endeavour to make a total oblivion of past scenes and events a part of my duty. But at present my efforts are baffled——

“ Too cruel Mem’ry ! never ceasing
 To rack me with contrasted scenes
 Of bliss, which scarce could know increasing—
 Of torment, which feels all extremes”—

But time may effect a change, aided by the hope of again seeing you. Should Mr Irwin be tempted to return to England—*should* I be suffered to return to your protecting arms—*should* I forget all the hurries and chagrin one ungenerous man at so early an age made me experience, I might recover the health I have lost, and be happy again. Clarendon-Hall is preparing for my Sister’s reception. We went a few days ago to look at it ; and though I had no recollection of a single part of the house before I got to it, yet the instant I beheld it I remembered the Nursery, and the room my dear Mother slept in, and they brought back some tender impressions to my mind, which induced me to take refuge in the Park : there I saw the very temple in which

she preserved me from the fury of an enraged swan, by catching it round the neck with all her force, till the Nurse had taken me in her arms. The train of thought which these faint images inspired, made me anxious to remain at this abode of my happy childhood, where, without superstition, I cherish the fond, the consoling idea, that

“Perhaps her Spirit *here* may hover,
 May *here* its sainted vigil keep,
 And in an Angel’s voice discover
 The hour when I shall cease to weep.”

The exquisite, indescribable pleasure which imagination had created by this fond hope made me more tranquil than I have been since the discovery I made upon seeing my Sister. We returned to town, and, for the first time, my elected Brother held my hand, from the carriage to the hall. Form to yourself my surprize at hearing him address, in a very low voice, these words

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to my ear: "Suffer me to have five minutes conversation with you, to explain a doubt which disturbs my peace." I replied, "Impossible—it is my *inclination* to forget the past, and it is your *duty*." Here is a new stroke to parry, for he is bold enough to persecute me with attempts to detain me; but I am so perpetually upon my guard, that I trust I shall defeat all his projects. What can explanation avail him now? He cannot undo the past. I should be criminal to suffer such a topic to be renewed between us, when I consider the situation he stands in with my Sister.

When I had got thus far, I was called upon to accompany them to take a house in Portland-place, which they had seen twice before. At quitting it, Caroline perceived she had left her muff up stairs, so she requested Sir Frederick to bring it down. Sir James Saville said, "No, Caroline, don't let

him : he has sprained his leg in getting out of the coach." So, secure that he could not follow, I went up myself ; but returning, I met him at the very door of the room it was left in. He tried to seize my hand, but I relinquished the muff, and ran past him down stairs, telling Caroline I could not deny my Brother the pleasure of serving her.

One would think such a marked disapprobation from me would tempt him to give up so improper a wish and pursuit. But I am sorry to say there is no appearance of this at present. My Aunt Mortimer sent a note to Caroline this evening to desire her to take her work ; so I was left to make tea and play chess with Sir James Saville. At half past eight Sir Frederick Hambledon called, and I again made tea, which was just over. A gentleman, whose name I know not, came in in about half an hour, and requested a little private conversation with Sir James, who instantly left the room.

at one door, while I eluded Sir Frederick's attempt to detain me, by flight at a second. At supper I said what I meant him to comprehend very thoroughly; for, talking about temper and disposition, I pretended possessing a fault I do not in fact. — I said, "if once I made a resolution of any kind, I was *immoveable* — I *never* changed." They condemned it. I did not defend it further than by saying, "I considered well before I determined upon any thing; because I knew when I had *once* done so, it was unalterable."

The two Miss Savilles are expected to return from Harrowgate in ten days; which I am anxious for, as numbers would give me security. I think Sir Frederick is tenderly attached to Caroline,—more so than she is to him; and yet I do not know where she is deficient.

I begin a new day now. Yesterday's company prevented me from adding

one line to my little volume. My Sister's intended Husband embitters my existence by his pursuits; he is incessantly seeking to entrap me, and I studiously avoiding every opportunity. From morning till night we each have recourse to opposite stratagems: — it wears me so thin, that I really look an object. A slight sore throat confined Sir James to his chamber yesterday; at night Caroline's maid wanted her opinion about her cloaths, and she left us. A letter from a friend of Sir James requested the immediate loan of a hundred and fifty pounds till twelve o'clock next day; he therefore requested Sir Frederick to go to his scrutoire and bring him that sum. "Willingly," said he, "if my Sister Sophia will carry the candle." "That she will," replied Sir James, to my real confusion. "Pray," said I, "what will my Sister say, if I encourage such idleness by complying with Sir Frederick's request? Not I, indeed: she would never forgive me

for indulging him in such bad habits." He replied, "that a candle was so unsafe amongst papers, that he had been induced to take a very unpardonable liberty with Miss Sophia Clarendon." "My girl is only in fun," said Sir James; "I never venture myself without a servant to attend me, for fear of a spark: but besides this, I wisely set one as the spy upon the other." Caroline will never suffer her Husband to make the proof of one indulgence the precedent for others." "Indeed, Sir James," said I, "nobody dreads a spark more than I do:—but I obey you." Thus compelled, I took up my candle; but fortunately met Sir Frederick's servant, who was coming to deliver a note to his Master, at the very door of the chamber; and into his hands I consigned it, without making any apology to my elected Brother, and retired to my own room, where I waited till supper; at which time I joined the party, and found that this

tiresome man had not betrayed me to Sir James, as he again called us—"his spies."

How unfortunate is it that Lady Alcondale has been so unavoidably engaged ever since my coming to England! I have not yet seen her. Were we acquainted, and did she prove as amiable as all here tell me she is, I would repose a confidence in her, if necessity obliged me to do so. I sadly fear I never can perform the trying task of assisting at the marriage ceremony. I am above disguise with you, my dear friend. I will own that I feel a hurry, a tumult, at the bare idea; but they proceed from indignation, I am persuaded—not from the smallest remains of tenderness or regard. Yet I am almost afraid to make the decision, whether my conjectures are right or wrong. I think—I wish it was all over—for till it is so, I must feel these agitations: and when it is unalterable,

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I trust and believe all my resentments will subside.

I am requested to take a walk in the Square, so adieu till my return, for I shall have leisure again before dinner.

When I got down stairs to take the walk I mentioned in the Square, I found the only person inclined to turn in it was Sir James; so we left the loving pair at the harpsichord, and sallied forth. In about an hour Sir Frederick Hambledon joined us, as my Sister was gone up to dress; and, soon after, a gentleman, who began to relate the Debates of the preceding evening, in which Mr. Fox had displayed such astonishing powers upon the subject of the Slave-Trade. Sir James seemed lost in attending to his Friend, but all at once recollecting that I was leaning on his arm, which I never had quitted, he made an apology to me, saying, "We old fellows are very un-

gallant, Miss Clarendon: Sir Frederick will profit by it, if you will allow him to see you home." I saw such a visible triumph in his eyes, which seemed to exult in having caught me in his toils, that I was distressed beyond measure at the ungenerous gratification he seemed to take in my situation: however, Heaven preserved me here,—for at the moment I saw a Lady, whose Mother Caroline had enquired after the day before; I curtsied, and enquired after Lady Barrycourt, and whispering, "that I feared I should lose my garter," begged her arm till I got into the Hall, which she readily granted. The vexation and chagrin on Sir Frederick's countenance were undisguised—because he dreaded no family witnesses. I feel quite secure that you will approve my conduct. Had he been even indifferent to Caroline, his base, ungenerous, cruel behaviour to me at Bengal justifies my determination of never holding a

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conversation with him upon the subject. Perhaps *one* apology from him, *one* tear of contrition, would awaken a pity in my bosom I dare not trust myself with feeling ; because it would destroy all the pride I have raised as the only barrier between me and too great a share of sensibility. I must close this page. Mr. Parkinson's persuasion, that you may be ordered to England, dwells upon my mind. I neither eat, sleep, nor talk without having your images present to me. God grant me, my dearest friend, the inexpressible satisfaction of beholding you both ere long ; and in the mean while resign me to a ready acquiescence with his decrees ! I trust I shall succeed in my ardent endeavours to obtain this tranquillity. Pray for me, my loved friend, and believe that I am, with affectionate duty and regard, your ever obliged God-daughter,

SOPHIA IRWIN CLARENDON.

LETTER LXVI.

FROM MISS CAROLINE CLARENDON TO LADY
ALCONDALE.

Grasvenar-Square.

THE pleasing hope which Lord Alcondale has just now given me, that you mean to be in town for three days, as soon as the Dowager takes her leave of you, affords me a degree of comfort I very much want; for I am most unhappy just now at the situation of every body about me, a gloom not a little aided by Captain Belgrave's return: I was reading the paper when this unexpected article met my eyes. I wish to God he had staid till the third week in December, for my submission to Sir James's request to name the twelfth for my *sacrifice*, was owing to this persuasion. Rest assured, my indulgent friend, that I will not give you cause to censure these expressions beyond *that* day. While it is not criminal to enquire after him, let me know whether his health is amended.

You will think Sophia's dejection is infectious ; my own spirits are low, Sir Frederick's appear half forced, and he looks far from well. A kind of serious thought for some days past makes me fear my Guardian has been too communicative about the former situation of my heart ; his looks, his affected mirth, and his momentary absences alarm me. My Aunt Mortimer says, this alarm is unfounded ; but that she imagines he is injured by Sophia's inattentions to him : she scarcely converses with him, as I have formerly told you ; but when any indifferent person enters she immediately joins in every subject, and so pleasantly too, that I am more grieved that she has this capricious habit. I truly am shocked at the whole tenor of her behaviour, which is calculated to make herself and every one about her unhappy : this coolness and perversity on her part is quite unmerited by Sir Frederick, who, out of respect to *me*, seeks for opportunities of obliging her. This morning he

gathered each of us a nosegay from the hot-house. I instantly put mine in my bosom ; Sophia took her's with a look of thanks, but in a minute restored it to his hands, declaring "flowers always gave her the head-ach ;" yet she has perpetually worn them every night since. When Sir Frederick left the room, which he presently did with a visible chagrin, I thought it my duty to speak freely to her upon the subject. She saw my intention, I believe, for, before I spoke she coloured and turned pale in the instant, which created a thousand apprehensions on the score of her temper, which must be very irritable, to anticipate in this manner. I said, "I was concerned to find that she took pleasure in distressing a very worthy man, whose fate was connected with mine in so marked a manner ; that I thought his noble conduct, towards her in particular, in the intentional present of ten thousand pounds, deserved at least a grateful return, a sentiment I felt very strongly to him,

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as it was regard for *me* that made him thus generous to my Sister." She answered quite in a tremulous voice, "that she was very sorry I had conceived an unfavourable opinion of her; she never designed to be remiss in proper or necessary attentions to any body whatever—that her mind was too deeply engrossed with the afflicting situation of her dear friend Mrs. Irwin, to be at leisure to consult other people's tempers." She added a regret, "that Sir Frederick Hambledon should place any part of her behaviour to a wrong source; *he* must know she meant to do right, whether she succeeded or not." "Consider," said I, "Sophia, he is as *yet* a perfect stranger to your heart, he can only judge of it from your actions." "I only wish *him* to judge of *it*, Sister, *from* my actions," she replied with some warmth; "if he takes offence, and distresses you with it, I am very sorry for it." I assured her Sir Frederick never had expressed a disapprobation of her behaviour,

though I would acknowledge Sir James Saville had, and in pointed terms.

"I am unhappy, indeed," said she, "to have my actions misconstrued; I am sorry any body should think so unamiably of me." "Say the same thing, my dear Sophia, before Sir Frederick, it will be an apology." "I must be convinced, Caroline, that I have done wrong first; till *then* I can make no concessions." The vexation I felt made me get up to quit the room. "One more sentence," said I, "and I am done, Sophia; Sir Frederick Hambleton *may* submit to your unconciliating temper *now*, but I would not wish him to bear with contempt from the Sister of his *Wife*."

"Good God, Caroline!" said she, "recall that severe sentence! believe me, my dearest Sister, *your* Husband will always be affectionately regarded by *me*:" (her tears almost obstructing her utterance, which affected me ex-

tremely) "he possesses my warmest wishes for his happiness, and ever will do so." The energetic manner of her delivery proved to me that I had hurt her feelings in taxing her with a designed inattention to him: I was much grieved that I had done so; but a circumstance happened in the evening, to convince me I had not yet brought her over to my wishes.

Company has interrupted me, and I shall lose the post unless I conclude: I shall so soon see you, that I scarcely regret the shortness of your letter, since it contains such agreeable news. The two Savilles are expected on Thursday; their re-admission to our society may effect a desirable change in this unaccountable Sister of mine: pray Heaven it may! Maria Saville's face is perfectly cleared of the surfeit; but she is far from well, her Sister says, in a letter to Sir James. Believe me not a little impatient to see you.

CAROLINE CLARENDON.

LETTER LXVII.

MISS M. SAVILLE TO LADY LUCY SAVILLE.

Grosvenor-Square.

MY DEAREST LUCY,

DURING my abode at that horrid bore of a place, Harrowgate, at such a dead and dreary season of the year, I had neither spirit nor inclination to write to any body; but the recovery of my looks, and my return to town, have wiped out all recollection of former pain and mortification; and unless I reflect upon the injury I accidentally did to a half-pay Officer's heart in Yorshire, I shall not spend a thought on the unpleasant confinement I endured previous to my journey, or of Harrowgate, the vilest of all places in winter. Come, my dearest Cousin, to rejoice with the happiest of all happy girls; your animated Maria has dived into the heart of Charles Seymour, who has asked Papa's permission to address me. I think he might have asked mine first;

but I shall not quarrel for trifles, my dear—I could have no objection, you know, for his fortune is sufficient to afford me every indulgence. Such an elegant man too! he will be a darling, I foresee. He fell desperately in love with me at Lady Alcondale's ball; and though Papa trusted the secret to Fanny, she was so ill-natured as to keep it to herself, which has involved me in a great deal of perplexity; but I rely upon you to assist me, as you have often done, with your counsel and advice. Do not blame me, my dear Lucy; you do not know how the poor man, whom I just mentioned at Harrogate, adores me.

From the very night of our first arrival at the inn, I observed this gentleman watch all my motions, and when I stood at the window he gazed at me, to use his own words, "with a devotion Pilgrims gaze on shrines." He contrived to meet every day at the Spa, and my compassion got the better

of my prudence ; and I complied with his entreaty to give and receive a written promise of marriage. I am so afraid he should try to hold me to this silly bargain, that I own I want your advice how to manage.

Papa this morning told me he approved highly of Mr. Seymour's character ; but, between ourselves, I fear he wants spirit : he keeps horses, but does not seem fond of play ; and though some people call it a vice, it is a very fashionable one. I do not want *him* to enter into it, but it would be very provoking if he had any objection to my doing as every other woman of high fashion, spirit, and ton does. But I shall make my conditions, I can assure him ; if he loves me, he will make every sacrifice, on his part, a pleasure. Sir James desired me by no means to name a time, without consulting him first, which I promised ; but I cannot help thinking all delays are dangerous. Poor Lady Clara Steward missed be-

ing a young widow, with a large jointure, by this folly, for her lover was killed in a duel at Cork.

I am vastly fond of Sophia Clarendon since my return home ; before I went to Harrowgate I did not like her to see me, and desired Caroline and Fanny not to let her come into my bed-chamber, for I was a horrid figure. Last night I told this dear girl my secrets, and waited two hours after in her room, in hopes she would put an equal confidence in me ; I suppose they will take up a whole day to relate, for though I staid so long, she never began, fearing, I imagine, that she would not have leisure to finish. Sir Frederick had a letter from Lord Tre-
courcey, who is well, and talks of England soon ; but cannot contrive to be
brideman. Adieu, dear Lucy : let me hear from you shortly, I beseech you :
I am ever your affectionate Cousin,

MARIA SAVILLE.

LETTER LXVIII.

FROM MISS SOPHIA CLARENDON TO MRS.
IRWIN, BENGAL.

I AM this moment delighted to hear that a Packet is likely to go out to India with extraordinary dispatches — and shall they arrive without a mark of gratitude from your child, Sophia? No, my dear friend, the heart which cherishes this sentiment, seeks every opportunity to prove its existence. With how tender an anxiety do I expect an account of my MENTOR! In my situation, apprehension gets the dominion over me: Hope, which enlivened all my infant hours, has forsaken its mansion, and the magic of Fancy has no longer power to recall the wanderer. Would to Heaven the ceremony was over between Sir Fre-

derick and Caroline ! I am persuaded I shall be happier when it is so, and my health will be amended ; which is impossible while he persecutes me with perpetual attempts to explain what I must not hearken to. His innocence (as he has the presumption to call it) can avail nothing at such a time.

The twelfth of December approaches very fast : my Sister gave me a hundred pounds to equip myself for this event, though she did not expressly state the occasion. I fear the poor girl does not rejoice in the approaching change, though Sir James Saville and my Aunt Mortimer assured me Caroline highly approved it. I know there are natures alike incapable of extreme pleasure or pain : for the first moment of my life, I envy such apathy.

The cramp in Sir Frederick's stomach, which I mentioned in my last,

returned with such violence in two days, that he was obliged to be put to bed instantly, and a Physician sent for, who said, "he had doubts about him;" and for three days he was in real danger. My Sister insisted upon my attending her every evening to his chamber, where I made tea for him. God knows what a trial this proved to me. He looked so ill, that in spite of all the resolutions I had made to command my feelings, I suffered beyond expression. Yet I hope mere compassion gave rise to that pity which I must have felt for even a stranger. But this intruding pity I concealed with the aid of a bonnet and veil. Indeed my caution never forsakes me. Apprehension for my Sister's peace of mind has made a complete skeleton of me. The very morning of his illness he brought us each a present of a very beautiful nosegay. Not suspecting any thing, I thanked him, and was placing it in my bosom, when I saw a note

tied round the flowers, which I did not chuse to receive ;—it was necessary to put it again into *his* hands, lest my Sister should see it. I said, “ I must return it, as flowers made me ill.” His chagrin at the ill success of his stratagem was visible. Some time after, poor blind Caroline gave me a reprimand she thought I deserved—I was obliged to parry the lecture a little, fearing I should have more occasions to behave in this manner. My life is a life of escapes—May I succeed ! My Sister’s prospect is not an enviable one, but I leave every thing to Providence, who will never desert us.

So far had your boasting Sophia wrote yesterday, when she was caught in the very trap she sought to avoid—a voice came to my door, saying, “ Madam, Miss Clarendon is seeking of you !” I quitted my writing, locked it up, and ran down to Caroline’s dressing-room ; when—judge of my sur-

prize and indignation at beholding the door closed upon me by Sir Frederick, who had posted himself behind it, on purpose to deceive me. More dead than alive, I said, with a look of contempt,—“I did not expect this piece of treachery from Sir Frederick Hambleton: I intreat you, Sir, to give me instant liberty.” “Cruel Sophia!” said he, “you have driven me to this desperate act, by your inhuman persevering silence—you have driven me to despair.” “For mercy’s sake, Sir Frederick! for my loved Sister’s future peace, consider of what you are now doing!—My God! what must she think of me, did she see you in this attitude?” “Hear me, adored Sophia, suffer me to ask you a few questions necessary to my peace:” “Never, Sir, will I enter upon a subject which involves the past — As you hope for mercy, set me free!—spare me the appearance of so detestable a crime as ingratitude. Cherished, protected, and

supported by Caroline, shall I give torture to her soul, by creating jealousy in her bosom? If you are my Friend"—
 "Your Friend? angelic girl! your Adorer!" — "Stop, Sir, nor prophane my ears with such language from a Brother. I love you not:—I detest deceit. Unlock the door!" "Never, Miss Clarendon, till you promise to give me a patient hearing." For what purpose?" "To know why you treated me ill; and why your intended connection with the damn'd Nabob did not take place, Madam? Your best Friend is my authority. Cruel and unfeeling as your pretending ignorance of the sincerity of a passion you encouraged is, it is nothing in comparison to your studied barbarity since."

"Injured, Sir, as I have been by your duplicity, in pretending a passion, and abandoning me as soon as you had insidiously wormed the secret from me, (which I blush at the bare recollection

of) and insulted by a charge of having acted dishonourably to you,—they are little in comparison to the outrage you commit at this instant on my feelings and understanding—the pitiful evasion of throwing dark hints at Mr. Irwin's integrity inspires me with new indignation. I insist upon my liberty, and bid you from henceforth respect me as your *Sister*."

"No, Madam ! that title is in my my power to withhold from you ; and, as I hope for Heaven, I never will give you the hated term." Oh ! Sir Frederick, should my Sister return, how infamous must I appear !" " Promise, Sophia, to give me a meeting *this once*, to explain." " I will *not*, Sir." " I intreat you, adored woman, to pity me." " Shew pity to *me*, Sir. I am too, too wretched ! I abhor myself for holding converse with you, inhuman, cruel Brother !" " Exasperate me not, Madam, by using that hateful term—

as you value your peace, Sophia, drive me not too far, I am not master of myself." "Oh, Sir Frederick, will you destroy my peace? My name will be used to convey a kind of baseness that yet wants a term — would you have me listen to the man who is the elected Husband of my Sister? Would you have me poison her unsuspecting heart, and banish its repose? Forbid it reason, religion, pride, gratitude, and honour! Upon my knees I once more ask you to open the door"——"Cruel, unrelenting Sophia, to what will your rigour drive me!" A knock at the house-door made him replace the key in the lock. "Gracious Heaven, I hear Caroline's voice!---appoint an hour." "*Never!* every moment I stay here adds to my abhorrence." "Say you forgive me this outrage." "Rest assured, Sir Frederick, that I forget and forgive every past circumstance which alone regards myself; but I am feel-

ingly alive to whatever touches my Sister."

Caroline's voice procured my release—I escaped to my own apartment undiscovered; but the tremor on my nerves and spirits is still violent. Did I not know your estimable Husband to be above art or disguise, I should have startled at the apparent innocence of his countenance, and the vehement reproaches of my falsehood; had he taxed any other individual than my honoured Mentor, my heart, notwithstanding all its resolves, had softened into pity; and, though unknown to a living creature, had repined at his engagement to another;—but the attempt to calumniate such integrity hardens my heart against him.

—He has not ventured to lift up his eyes to me since; the Savilles are a great relief to me, and two gentlemen, who are permitted to be perpetually

here, preserve me from some dangerous trials. Sir James Saville is so amiable, so benevolent, and so exactly what the Father of a family should be, that at moments I am inclined to throw myself upon his mercy; but these impulses are of short duration, when I reflect upon the opinion he must instantly have of Sir Frederick's conduct, and the dread to bestow Caroline upon a man who has behaved so basely to *me*. His very secrecy implies guilt; but I must, in justice to him, contradict an error in one of my former letters: *he did not assume a fictitious name*, but changed it for his Uncle Sir Arthur Hambledon's estate. Could I but bring myself to entreat Sir James to detain me for one month or six weeks after the marriage, on account of my health, I should in *that* time wear away all uncomfortable feelings. Were you in England, my dear friend, I should not have undergone such agitating scenes; but I am, indeed, a poor for-

lorn creature, who has no one to consult or hide me from the penetrating eyes of a man, who may place my visible emotions to regard instead of indignation. My dear injured Caroline cannot know that I require any other being to shelter me from her; exquisitely amiable as she is, she cannot serve me here. My fate is indeed a hard one. If you have any new load of misery to bear, how criminal am I to add to its weight. My dearest friend, pray for your adopted Sophia, and embrace every opportunity of conveying letters to her whose only chance of future tranquillity depends on you, and dare I venture to add the loved name of my Mentor,—oh, may he be but sensible of the interest his Protegee takes in his recovery! Adieu, dearest valued friend, adieu! Love your ever obliged and dutiful child,

SOPHIA IRWIN CLARENDON.

LETTER LXIX.

FROM MISS CAROLINE CLARENDON TO LADY
ALCONDALE.

WHAT a cruel baulk to my expectations! I feel as if we should never meet again after all these disappointments. I am, nevertheless, glad you have had courage to part with your tooth, as it has plagued you so eternally. Pray wear a hood the day you come to town, for a little air would cause your cheek to swell. Lord Alcondale is just gone, and left his sweet boy behind him till seven in the evening, when he promises to redeem his pledge by sitting an hour with us first. I am, however, employing my wits to detain him the whole evening, by having the little dimity bed in Sophia's room ready for the child, as we should enjoy the Father's company three or four hours longer. I cannot help thinking this visit to town is to serve or

see poor Belgrave—but I will not inquire.—I am sure I ought not.

I must turn my thoughts to Sophia, who is an *inexplicable contrariety*. A few days ago Sir Frederick became unwell all of a sudden, when my Sister got some brandy in an instant, which did him service; but two days after, his complaint returned with great force, and Dr. Hubertson was alarmed about him. The tender anxiety Sophia testified for me in her silent actions, is beyond any thing you can conceive: she devoted her whole time to console me; naturally imagining, that no other subject could occupy a woman who was on the eve of becoming his wife. Every hour she stole up unperceived, to enquire after him of the servant who always attends him: when he was somewhat better, she would convey the news with transport; when worse, with the most lively concern. But now that he is quite well again, she returns to her sullen reserves. She now absents her-

self whenever she can, and appears to me to study a plan of conduct very unnatural. But to give you a just idea of such extraordinary traits in her character, I must relate the event of yesterday. We three went to Portland place, to see how they got on with the house, (which is in great forwardness,) and afterwards to chuse our carpets. In our return home up Oxford-road, I saw a very elegant cap at a milliner's window, which I liked extremely ; I stopped the chariot, in order to purchase it for Sophia, but designing to bespeak a full suit of linen to wear with it, I did not wish *her* to alight with me, so turning to both, I said, " Pardon me, good folks, for five minutes ; I have a secret commission to perform, and I will not detain you long." To describe the consternation in my Sister's countenance is impossible ; white as a sheet, she stuttered in an incoherent manner, " I must get them now—the gloves—indeed I am obliged—cannot help it, and other things, my dear Caroline."

and scarcely waiting for the step of the carriage to be let down, she jumped out. I protest it struck me quite into a heat. Sir Frederick seemed as much confounded as *I* was. This was a new insult; she did not chuse to talk to him during the few minutes of my absence. It gratified her visibly to have effected this new chagrin to me and to him, for I never saw her more cheerful or interesting than she was the remainder of the day.

At eight Charles Seymour and Mr. Beaumont came; the latter brought his Sister's little boy to thank Miss Saville for a fine toy she had sent him. Both the men seemed quite charmed with Sophia, who was in the *amiables*, played upon the harpsichord, and sung divinely. I never heard her voice till the present importunity of Sir James Saville had induced her to sing. The child discovered my lute, and begged her to touch it "like Mamma," when she brought forth such harmonious sounds,

and accompanied them with her voice, that we were perfectly enchanted. I only regretted Sir Frederick was absent: while I was doing so he unexpectedly entered the room, having quitted a great dinner at an early hour; but she carelessly let the lute fall to the ground, and said, "she was not fond of the instrument." We re-urged her, but in vain, only to finish the air. The extreme rudeness to Sir Frederick prevented his joining in the request. Her whole face was covered with blushes, instantly after she had laid it by; but she would not retract it: nor did she articulate ten syllables the whole night after. I really am lost in conjecture and amazement! How can I perform the vow I made to my sainted Mother? What a difficult lot is mine! A lady told me this evening I was the envy of all my friends—if I was not happy, who could be so? I heard her, and thought with myself, what a blessing it is that our observations are so superficial! I sometimes feel afraid mere

visitors should penetrate into what passes in my heart. I am sure I harbour no sentiment to be ashamed of, yet I would not have the world discover a regret which I cannot suppress. This day week, my dear friend—I am sure you have thought of it. I tried my clothes on this morning—Sophia was with me, and my own maid. I do not know what possessed me—my tears fell in torrents, and this dear strange girl mingled her's, from sincere affection for me. I was shocked that my maid had witnessed this scene. Sophia brought me off, by saying, "Well, Caroline, since it gives you such pain to part with your liberty to a man you love so extremely, I shall take warning in time, and never allow myself to be in love."

I hear your *cara sposo's* voice, so wonder not at my quitting a lady for an elegant beau. I am sincere to tell you my motives. Adieu! your's,

CAROLINE CLARENDON,

LETTER LXX.

SIR FREDERICK HAMBLETON TO LORD TRE-
COURCY, DUBLIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I AM wound up to the highest pitch of despair! Nothing can save me, nothing can extricate me from my impending fate. My dear Trecourcy, I will *not* live a dishonoured villain;—I dare *not* marry Caroline—I cannot conquer my adoration of Sophia—this day week may my agonized heart forget to beat first! Curse on my tongue, that led me to the hated subject, when the believing Caroline, in a moment of pity, meant to make me happy, by naming the day!—a day, when Hambledon must *be* a villain, *if* he takes her to the altar, —must *appear* a villain *if* he leaves her! —I am distracted,—I am incapable of

thinking for myself! Had Sophia suffered me to speak to her, had she read only one letter, had she had common humanity, I had not thus been involved in misery. The belief that Irwin has deceived us *both*, and which arises from her haughty treatment of me, made me seek this conversation. Had we been wronged, I would have thrown myself on Caroline's mercy: but Sophia's cursed refinement has cost me my peace for ever. If I fly, I lose every chance of beholding the Sister of her I injure: if I marry, I abandon every hope. It would be criminality to gaze upon her. I will not act dishonourably, by leaving Caroline without explaining my conduct. I dare not fly, for by that act I should abandon every hope of calling her mine. I have six days to decide what path I shall take in this variety of wretchedness. My coward tongue denies me utterance when I have resolved to open my conflicts to the generous, amiable, pitying Caroline. Good God! can I use

this angelic woman ill? No—impossible! How base should I be to unite myself to her, when my heart is so strongly attached to Sophia! Proud, suffering, heroic girl! beneath her scorn I discover her struggles, her conflicts are great as mine. Yet here I deceive myself; did she regard me, would she have persevered in cruelty? No! I have certainly injured Irwin by my suspicions. Would to God I could always bear the infamous dismissal she gave me, through this man, in my mind, I should not hesitate to accompany Caroline to the altar! I must detest Sophia, when I believe she sent me that paltry, mean, evasive, dirty apology for preferring gold to affection. Irwin is an honourable man, and incapable of fraud. Things are gone too far with Caroline to recede, I fear. God grant me a release one way or other! If you have any compassion in your nature, write immediately to your wretched friend,

FREDERICK HAMBLEDON.

LETTER LXXI.

FROM MISS SOPHIA CLARENDON TO MRS.
IRWIN, BENGAL.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

IN twice eight and forty hours shall I be decked out in splendid miseries, to attend Caroline to the altar. I have determined to exert myself, and make no excuse whatever. I owe every respect to my Sister, and my reason, with the Divine aid, will enable me to stand a severe trial. I did very wrong last night, and I am not at peace with myself; a little boy was playing about the room, he brought the lute which he discovered, and begged me to play, which I had already done upon the harpsichord. I need not add, Sir Frederick was *not* at home, nor expected till a very late hour. I was imprudent enough to play the sweet air he composed for me,

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with words I have lately adapted to it.
I was singing,

O! early lov'd! thy magic name
Still pales my lip, still shakes my frame,
Still bids my throbbing bosom prove
The sharp keen pang of hopeless love,

For thee the matin pray'r shall rise
To Heaven, borne up on vagrant sighs,
For thee be form'd a *tenderer* thought
Than *yet* affection ever wrought.

Deep in my bosom's hidden cell
Thy virtues and thy form shall dwell,
Till Heaven's all pitying will decrees
My love (but first my life) to cease.

When, to my astonishment, I beheld
him enter the room, the lute fell to
the ground, and I experienced a cruel
mortification at supposing this unfor-
tunate song might tempt him to try
some new stratagem to speak to me.
The bare idea dashed my spirits for
the remainder of the evening. All
Caroline's magnificent apparel is ready,
and mine comes home to-night. Sir
Frederick gave her a most beautiful

watch, at which hangs the *very* miniature which was doing for me, at the time he so unworthily rewarded my acknowledgement of a regard for him. I did not know it was finished, and believed that it was left on the painter's hands at Bengal. To-morrow, the Bishop, who is to perform the ceremony, dines here, and the Alcondales, for the first time, are to be of the party: they continue in town till this is over, and we all go to Alcondale-Park together, where there will be a breakfast; after which Sir Frederick, Caroline, Miss Saville, and I, go to Clarendon-Hall for a week. My Sister seems a resigned, submissive victim, rather than a happy, voluntary bride. I am sure Belgrave is not *quite* forgotten. Poor girl! if my presages are true, she is still more pitiable than I am. I blush at myself for this sentence—how dare I feel regard for such a being! Surely I wrong myself. Indignation is the only sentiment I che-

rish for Sir Frederick Hambledon,—the only one a virtuous heart, so treated, so deceived, *ought* to own.

What am I to think of the conversation of this day? I was telling the circumstance of your alarming intelligence at the Cape to Mrs. Powerscourt, and she assured me Mr. Irwin would be instantly sent to England, if he survived the stroke; that she knew several people who had been afflicted in this way, but not one that was not sent home directly, as the heat of the climate was supposed to do the injury. My hopes revive, when I think this blessing is in store for me. I anticipate this luxury with more eagerness than I can express. This house has been in extreme concern for the folly of the younger Miss Saville, who, deaf to all the advice I could give her, pursued her own way, and by doing so, has lost the affections of a most estimable young man, whose addresses Sir

James Saville approved. None of her friends pity her in the least, for she deserves what she has met with. The young people, in general, seem to be driving Smithfield bargains when they marry. I read some newly drawn articles, a few days ago, of Miss Powerscourt's, and without thinking of the impropriety, I exclaimed, good God! why do you marry such a man? "Marry such a man, Miss Clarendon! he is a very amiable being; all my friends approve it, and I prefer him to all the world." "Pardon me," said I, "if I judged otherwise from the stipulation of articles, which else I should not have thought of. I confess that it appears to me like mutual doubt, and distrust of each other. I will never marry a man in whom I cannot place an unlimited confidence—Jointure is the only thing I should wish made certain, for *his* sake as much as my own; for I know widows who have not had sufficient to make a respect-

able appearance, though accustomed to every elegant indulgence in their husbands' life time."

"One four and twenty hours *have* elapsed since my quitting my pen.—Lady Alcondale is a very elegant woman of six and twenty, possessing a softness and delicacy in her person, ideas, voice, and manner, which would please you extremely:—she is quite a proper wife for Lord Alcondale, who is uncommonly prepossessing.—She has that happy manner I so much covet of conciliating esteem and winning the affections directly. Poor Caroline's eyes looked so swelled after a *tete-a-tete* with her friend, that I could not refrain from thinking "*we all dissembled.*" I did Sir Frederick only justice in abstracting his ungenerous conduct towards *me* from every other feature in his character. He is perfectly loved by every individual in this house, and Lady Alcondale assured me

to day that he is universally esteemed for his head and his heart every where. Had she had to make a convert of *me* she could not have dwelt more earnestly on his merits and his virtues than she did. My heart responded to every encomium, but I did not dare trust my voice to assent to the well known truths. In the evening, when we came up stairs, Lady Alcondale desired to see the whole wardrobe my Sister had purchased, and into her dressing-room we went for the purpose, where we had spent near an hour, when Sir Frederick tapped at the door. I opened it, thinking it was a servant with a message; but finding my mistake, I was quite hurried, for Caroline's tears had filled my eyes, and I feared his vanity might ascribe them to a wrong cause, so thinking this a good opportunity to leave the party, I returned to the drawing-room.

After tea I was engaged to go to Mrs. Mortimer's for an hour, and I went in

Sir James Saville's carriage ; but just as I had got into Oxford-road, I heard some voice stop the coach. The step was let down, and, to my extreme concern, Sir Frederick Hambledon entered, saying, " do set me down at the corner of Bond-street." I was too much dashed to speak. After a pause of a minute, he broke silence, by saying, " Your rigour, Miss Clarendon, drives me some lengths I am sorry to pursue ; but at this crisis of my fate I naturally catch hold of a shadow to save me from destruction. My bearing with an existence become hateful to me, will depend upon the attention you now lend to my interrogatories. I entreat you, by every thing most sacred, to tell me whether you commissioned Mr. Irwin to inform *me* that your affections were engaged ; some doubts have arisen in my mind upon the subject, and impelled me to distress you in the manner I have done, to obtain your acknowledgement or denial of a circumstance which so deeply in-

terests me. If I dare judge from the mysterious tenor of *your* conduct, we have both been deceived. In that case, I will throw myself upon Caroline's mercy, and withdraw, till Irwin's appearance may justify *each* to the *other*."

"When," I replied, "you mentioned a suspicion of Mr. Irwin's integrity some days ago, Sir Frederick, I treated the idea as it deserved, and have not altered my opinion with regard to a man whom I know to be incapable of any species of meanness *whatever*. The message you now enquire about merits no answer ; but as you have so particularly requested one, I will declare that such a commission from me to Mr. Irwin never passed my lips. And pardon me for adding, that I firmly believe it never entered your ears from Mr. Irwin's. You *oblige* me to speak without disguise. If I ever had the extreme weakness to feel a partiality

for you, it was because I thought your professions of attachment to me were not merely designed to while away an idle hour, but sincere. I judged of your rectitude by my own, and was punished for my credulity. I have now so wholly obliterated a regard I blush to recollect, that was I compelled to name the man whom of all mankind I would reject as a husband, I should instantly name Sir Frederick Hambledon." My anger almost rendered my words inarticulate. Strange to say, he seemed delighted with the energetic vehemence with which I spoke my mind. "Very well, Sophia, very well; go on I beseech you—your railing is balm to my soul. I now have to entreat you to sign a paper, declaring you never desired Irwin to deliver that message you disclaim having charged him with—tell me, too, whether your promise was ever engaged to Parkinson; for of *that*, also, Mr. Irwin *himself* by word of mouth assured me.

“ Ridiculous attempts to shake my confidence in that estimable friend,” said I; “ forbear a repetition of them, when I protest to you, I should as soon suspect myself as him, and that you may give due credit to what I now say, I think it proper to declare, that were your marriage with my Sister delayed upon any pretext whatever, I would never behold your face again—I would fly my Sister’s protecting arms, and take the consequent disgrace of *such* an action, sooner than wound her peace of mind, by relating the rise, progress, and sequel of our acquaintanceship at Bengal. So tenderly am I attached to Caroline, that I consult her happiness in preference to my own. I forget the past, unless you oblige me to recollect it; and am at this instant disposed to receive the husband of my dear Caroline with all the affection of a Sister. The reserves which, in our present situation, I *now* feel natural to my heart, will *then* be done away,—and

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you shall see that I am really what I promise to be, the faithful, attached, sincere, and grateful friend of my Brother and Sister; but it is in your power, by putting your unjust threats in execution, of throwing yourself on Caroline's mercy, to drive me from her affections, and to embitter the rest of my life, as I never will clear up my own conduct, since I cannot do so, without involving that amiable, that excellent girl's peace of mind."

I can only add that I am ever, ever your's,

SOPHIA IRWIN CLARENDON.

LETTER LXXII.

FROM SIR JAMES SAVILLE TO THE EARL OF
ALCONDALE.

MY DEAR LORD,

IN justice to Mr. Charles Seymour, who is now on his road to Paris, which place he had no intention to visit twelve hours ago, I take up my pen to assure you, that so far from condemning his conduct, with regard to my Daughter, I admire it. He has acted exactly as I should have done in the same situation. I sincerely lament the event which deprives me of a Son-in-law, whose heart I esteem, and whose merits would have been the security that my child had it in her own power to be happy. I deplore the unfortunate turn this affair has taken for two reasons ; one, the deprivation of

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so honourable a connection ; the other, that I can have no opportunity of uniting our families by blood as well as by friendship. My feelings are too much hurt to add the particulars of what I must ever esteem my Daughter's misfortune. I have the honour to be, my dear Lord, your Lordship's most affectionate friend and obedient humble servant,

JAMES SAVILLE.

LETTER LXXIII.

THE COUNTESS OF STAFFORDSON TO MISS
MARIA SAVILLE.

BAD news travels apace, my dear girl, and I am grieved to hear that Charles Seymour and you have had a quarrel. I am quite concerned, for his fortune is a noble one. I hope you

are not weak enough to regret a loss which may be supplied by a better soon. I would willingly shew Seymour a spirit if I were in your situation. He has spoke very free things of *me* to several of *my* friends, and I long for a piece of revenge which I could have, and at the same time shew you an act of friendship. You would bless me for it to the last hour of your life, if it succeeds. It is a very charitable act to all parties except the mean spirited Seymour, who would be gloriously mortified at seeing you so immediately and so greatly married; but I must explain our scheme, for dear Hellendale is as warm about it as I am.

You have often told me that Sir Frederick Hambledon singled you out very particularly till Miss Clarendon chose to entrap him. Any breach between them would bring the truant to you again. Belgrave is returned, and one interview between these former lovers

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would revive all their affection ; and it might, without difficulty, be so managed as to create jealous doubts in Sir Frederick's breast. Effect this interview, and all the rest comes of course. Now I would undertake all this, difficult as it is, provided you would give me a bond for five thousand pounds value received, and one-third of your pin-money yearly, let it be much or little. If you approve this exertion of my friendship, and wish me to manage matters for you, write me word, and agree to the conditions. Johnson has my orders to bring this letter back : after you have read it, but seal it before you give it to her, and enclose me any piece of Miss Clarendon's writing. Ask no questions,—trust to the unalterable friendship of your faithful

A. STAFFORDSON.

LETTER LXXIV.

FROM MISS MARIA SAVILLE TO THE COUNTESS
OF STAFFORDSON.

MY DEAREST, KINDEST FRIEND,

YOUR offers have revived my heart: the efforts of your exalted friendship are gratefully received by me; but, alas! I fear your kind schemes are impracticable. Tell me, first, what steps you would take; for I should be sorry to make mischief amongst lovers, unless in the end it was doing them service. I beg you to tell me all your plans, for I should be happy to mortify Seymour, even though I made my own heart ache: indeed he has given me great vexation, and is now the cause of more to me, for Papa condemns me without mercy. Murder comes out now: he was uneasy, it

seems, at some of the friendships I had formed, and intreated Papa to let him take me from them by an early marriage. He said, a town life was destructive to my health, and that he wished to live as his Uncle Alcondale does, near town, but not in it. Sir James, instead of resenting this assurance, approved it, and gave him leave to tell me, every thing was left to my decision. Not knowing what had passed between them, I complied, with naming six weeks hence. In the evening Seymour brought a rough draft of the writings, and desired me to read the paper, and let him know my opinion. I referred it to Papa, who I hoped would make a better bargain than I should, though I did not say so. We adjourned into the Study. Seymour proposed my fifteen thousand pounds should be settled on younger children; my jointure should be fifteen hundred a year, and my pin-money three. I said I thought three was too little;

which made Seymour dash it out and put five. He then said, "Sir James shall add even to *this*, if he thinks it not adequate to my loved, my angelic Maria's wants." My Father took the pen, and I was perfectly delighted, for I thought he would make it eight; when dashing the whole article through with his quill, he said, "In compliance with custom, I offered my Wife pin-money: that noble-minded woman crossed it out of the Articles, saying, "Do you think, Sir James, I would place my person in your hands, if I had any doubts of your honour? My conduct will always procure me the approbation of my Husband, and to this source alone will I look for pocket-money." We never had a separate purse. Now I wish my children to copy their Mother. Miss Clarendon has done the same; when I told her this circumstance seven years ago, she said she admired Lady Saville's notions, and would adhere to them when

she married. I answered nothing ; but I threw all the vexation I could muster into my countenance. Seymour saw this, and the concern he expressed in dumb shew, made me hope my looks would *always* awe him into humble submission to my will.

As we parted to go to the tea-room, I whispered Seymour to leave that paper with me at night, and I would restore it in the morning. Not one word of jewels, not one word of town and country house, equipages, or what I have always determined to have since I knew your situation and Lady Hellen-dale's, *an allowance in case of separation*. The experience my Father had given me of *his* indifference about the stile I was to appear in, made me determine to talk Seymour over to my purpose. I was all good humour, and the man seemed in ecstasy, so I thought it was wise to begin with the main article first. I said, " now, dear Seymour, you must

positively make *no* denials to what I am going to ask."—"Ask what thou wilt, and even to the half of my kingdom will I give thee," said he. "Well," said I, "it is a handsome provision in case we should chuse a separation."—He looked as if he was shot. "I am sure, I do not comprehend you, Maria: repeat what you was saying, and tell me if you are serious?" "Yes, indeed, Mr. Seymour, I am; so many people marry and part again *now*, that I think it prudent to stipulate that proviso in the marriage-articles." He now turned pale as ashes, flung the papers in the fire, and trembling with passion, said, "Madam, I am sorry I have ever troubled you with an affection, which *was* most ardent, but is wholly consigned to oblivion *now*. When *I* marry, I mean to marry for *life*." He went to Papa in the study, where he staid half the day in agony, Papa told me; but I never saw my gentleman after. He went off directly for France.

When I see Miss Clarendon's dejection, I do think it would be charity to bring Belgrave and her together. As to Sir Frederick Hambledon, he would indeed be a splendid exchange for Seymour; but how it ever could be brought about, I know not. Be assured I would gladly give the bond for five thousand pounds, payable after marriage, as I am certain he is too honourable to hesitate about discharging it; yet, in case he should scruple, I would have you make it so binding, that a court of law would obtain it for you. Do tell me your scheme, and rest assured of my lasting gratitude. I send the enclosed letter of Caroline's to Papa, only for the hand writing, which I hope you do not intend, however, to copy, as I should be wretched to be drawn into a scrape. Three days hence is the intended wedding: I do not think you can do any thing. Adieu, my dearest friend! ever sincerely your's,

MARIA SAVILLE.

LETTER LXXV.

FROM LADY STAFFORDSON TO MISS MARIA
SAVILLE.

AS no time is to be lost, I send back the enclosed letter to Belgrave, by Jones, who will contrive to leave it at his lodgings. Her being known to his servants as one of Sir James Saville's domestics will have a charming effect, in case he *should* doubt a hand-writing I have copied so amazingly well. Do not be afraid! I do not mean to send any *from him* to Miss Clarendon; so no detection can come of it. If he regards her still, he will embrace the opportunity; if *not*, he will be ashamed to own he ever received the letter: so it never can be known to a creature, unless it forwards their marriage, and then they will have no inclination to punish the forgery. I leave it open for you to

read. Could you get Caroline's watch for the seal, it would be quite delightful. I have drawn up the bond, which I desire you to sign before Jones, and let her bring it to your truly affectionate friend, at all times and seasons,

A. STAFFORDSON.

" TO AUGUSTUS BELGRAVE, ESQ.

" MY DEAR BELGRAVE,

" My inhuman Guardian, not content to deprive me of one dearer to me than life, is in the very act of consigning me to another, whom I hate, detest, and abhor, beyond poverty, disease, or death. In two days, the dreaded ceremony is to take place, and I am almost overwhelmed with despair. Your fortunate return to England gives me new hope — if your regard continues for a woman who has long preferred you to all the world, she now awaits you; she pants to renounce rank, splendour, fortune, all the world stamps value upon; to possess the more substantial bliss of passing her life with you.

" I conclude you will feel impatient till you convince me that I am still dear to you : the only method I *can* devise with any probability of success, is your coming to Sir James's at exactly nine o'clock to morrow evening ; follow the servant instantly into the drawing-room, where, throwing yourself at my feet, you may demand an explanation of a *report* which gives you pain—my intended marriage with Sir Frederick Hambledon. He is a man of such nice feelings, that he would be shocked at supposing he was about to receive the hand of a lady, whose heart was attached to a rival. I will boldly acknowledge the state of my affections, and we shall be happy in spite of all the obstacles which have arisen to render our lives miserable for so many years. With extreme regard, dear Belgrave, I remain, your affectionate Friend,

C. C."

LETTER LXXVI.

FROM MISS CAROLINE CLARENDON TO LADY
ALCONDALE.

MY DEAR LADY ALCONDALE,

A HEAVINESS hangs over me to so extreme a degree this day, that I entreat you to come to me if possible to-morrow—Ah! my friend!—to-morrow advances with such quick strides, that I beseech you to aid me to forget myself. I have spent my night in prayer, and rose easier in my mind; but I am not proof against the occurrences of this day. The less I am visible the better. I cannot account for a gloom which, I fear, possesses Sir Frederick; but Sir James Saville assures me my persuasions are imaginary, and that from being rather depressed myself at the most awful period of my life, every other person

must be tinged with dejection in my eyes. This reasoning, however, is not just:---I see too much joy in him, in his Daughters, in the domestics. Sophia, who is Melancholy personified, is the only congenial mind I discover in the house: yet I think Sir Frederick is in this respect congenial also. My God, assist my endeavour to have no will but my Husband's!---enable me to throw off the recollection of the past---let it be my heart that gains this mighty victory, my actions have already accomplished it to the world---do thou realize it in myself! Sir James Saville has this day presented me with ten bows of pearl to go down the sides of my gown, and he has just requested me to fling on my dress when it is completed. Your presence will strengthen me to appear like a bride.

A particular friend of Sir Frederick's (Lord Trecourcy) is just ar-

rived from Ireland, very unexpectedly, to their mutual delight, as he had declined being brideman. He was instantly introduced to me, and is a very pleasing, elegant man. This event is lucky in a double sense; for, besides promoting their pleasure, it leaves me at liberty. Sir Frederick was all tenderness, when Lord Trecourcy told me "he had often been taxed with possessing the gift of second sight by his friend, and he would acknowledge he perceived the future so clearly, that he pronounced us to be the most happy pair in each other, and the most perfect and admired examples of wedded life. His friend's tears and mine flowed from two very different causes: he kissed my hand, and unable to speak, left the room. Trecourcy soon followed, and I retired to my own room, where you will find me if you have the goodness to come.

I was reproaching myself with a propensity which daily gains strength,

that of lamenting incessantly my misfortunes, and only *casually* recollecting the blessings I have received from the Father of bounties. I am shocked at reviewing the ingratitude of my nature. Till I counted up some of the innumerable benefits I *am* in possession of, and placed them against the *two* grand trials I have experienced, I had no idea of the great injustice of my complaints in taxing Providence with having marked me out for misery. That I have done so, in a moment of agony undescribable, is now unfeignedly my regret. From this moment I abandon complaint, and wholly consign myself to God. Do thou give me grace to say from the depths of my heart,

That as *my* act, may thy great will be done!

Amidst the blessings, I have, however, never undervalued the *first*, the most *cherished*—the capability of feeling, re-

ceiving, sharing, and returning such a friendship as exists between us—

“Friendship! that best support of wretched man,
Which gives us, when our life is painful to us,
A sweet existence in a *second* being.”

I dare not be tender; we must both be very cheerful. Ah! foolish bravado! *thine* is a fee grief, due to *thy* single breast. Adieu, my dearest friend! Afford th *first* and last consolation to your ever faithful, affectionate, and obliged

CAROLINE CLARENDON.

LETTER LXXVII.

FROM MRS. IRWIN, AT PORTSMOUTH. TO MRS.
MONTIMER, HARLEY-STREET.

MY DEAR MRS. MONTIMER,

I AM sure you will be greatly surprised to receive a letter from me at this place. Thank God, we are arrived here safe, and not a little impatient to see you and our darling child, Sophia. I feared she would be almost out of her wits if I sent a line to her, so leave it to you to communicate a matter of such real joy to her. Lose no time, for charity's sake, but bring her down with you immediately, as my good man is ordered to remain quiet here for a week or ten days, before he takes the exercise of a carriage. Heaven has preserved him to me, with the hope of many years of health and satisfaction!

I know you will be impatient to learn by what miracle we are here so imme-

diately after our girl. I will allay your curiosity, by telling you, that on the very third day after our loved Sophia had sailed from the Cape in the Royal George, the Sultan East Indiaman brought my dearest Mr. Irwin to his anxious Wife. Never was any thing so fortunate, for I had taken my passage on board the Neptune, bound from Europe, which only waited for a wind to proceed on its voyage. The very idea that I *might* have missed my Husband, gives me, even at Porstmouth, a vile cholic; but I reserve my further chat till I embrace my dear Mrs. Mortimer. Say every thing kind to all friends, from

SOPHIA IRWIN.

LETTER LXXVIII.

FROM MRS. MORTIMER TO MRS. IRWIN, AT
PORTSMOUTH.

THIS unexpected blessing has half
overset me. We are unfeignedly thank-
ful, for our fears for dear Mr. Irwin
were great indeed. I have ordered
the chaise at seven to-morrow morning,
and shall think the hours woefully long
till I get to you; nevertheless I have
fears you will receive me with a pair
of long faces for not bringing your
girl Sophia, or what is more, even tel-
ling her of the joyful news for a day
or two, from the belief that Madam
would make a desperate dull bride-
maid to her Sister Caroline, who is to
be married most eligibly to-morrow
morning, to a Baronet of great fortune
and greater worth. Mr. Mortimer
will in the course of next day break
this agreeable intelligence to Sophia,
and bring her down himself, other-

wise he would have accompanied me. If she knew at present of your being in England, she would certainly *abscond*, was it even her own wedding, to embrace two people about whom she has spent so many anxious hours ; but her Brother-in-law might construe her absence from such a ceremony as disrespectful. However you may blame me, you will, upon knowing some particulars I can give you, approve of our silence to the dear girl, who is not so well as we wish her to be ; but as anxiety about you has been the sole cause, I doubt not she will speedily pick up her health and spirits. The bell has gone its last round, so I must hasten the servant with this after him. I pretend a sore throat as a plausible pretext for not witnessing the wedding to-morrow. Adieu till then, with affectionate love and good wishes from Mr. Mortimer. I remain truly, my dear Mrs. Irwin's sincere friend,

M. MORTIMER.

LETTER LXXIX.

FROM GENERAL BELGRAVE TO THE EARL OF
ALCONDALE.

MY DEAR LORD,

YOUR friendship has had so many troublesome offices to perform during the many years of our acquaintance, that I cannot be silent, when it is in my power to give you a real degree of pleasure for the recompence of many hours of pain you have willingly endured to restore me and my son, Captain Belgrave, to harmony, by informing your Lordship that our perfect reunion is now built upon the most solid foundation. I do not mean to mention the occasion to another friend in the world, but I owe a communication of every circumstance to you. My Son has nobly refused the proffered hand of Miss Clarendon from motives of duty to me, and regard to my future happiness, and I have consequently destroyed the *will* I formerly reserved

in a moment of just indignation. I do mean, without loss of time, to make my final one, leaving every thing to my dear Son, a few legacies excepted. I shall delay this till you have chosen four pictures out of my whole collection, as a proof of my sincere regard. In consequence of the intended marriage between old Clarendon's daughter and Sir Frederick Hambledon, I have withdrawn my desire of uniting my Son with Lady Annamaria Albion, as the Lady is not quite satisfied with his recent visit to Paris. This rupture may easily be improved to a total relinquishment.

I have no apprehensions of hearing Lord Alcondale tell me anew "that an *bonest man* would not go to his bed without having made his will." You see I recollect *strong* expressions, which now deserve *strong* assurances of the regard, esteem, and obligation with which I have the honour to be your Lordship's obedient servant,

GEORGE BELGAVE.

LETTER LXXX.

FROM MISS SOPHIA CLARENDON TO
MRS. IRWIN, AT BENGAL.

MY DEAREST, DEAREST FRIEND,

IT is now night, and all the world is gone to repose, the forlorn, the wretched Sophia excepted. My conflicts are almost over—I am resigned to God's will. Enable me, oh my Father, my Protector, my Friend, to endure this trial of torture! Strengthen and confirm me in virtue! Upon my knees, I beseech thee to bless my Sister and her Husband! Compose *his* corroding accusation of cruelty toward me, whose sole and only crime was loving him to a tender excess—loving him with a purity Angels might learn from Heaven to witness. Yes! dearly loved! My heart forgives thee even this unkindness; but vain are my endeavours to wipe from my aching breast the fond,

the adored image of him who has deceived me.

“ Sure there is Pity sitting in the couds,
Which sees into the bottom of my grief”——

and calms at this moment my agitations, which have been almost too much for my poor frame.—It is but a *little* while—I must relate the events of this day, the last day of my Sister’s agitations I hope, for poor dear, I am convinced, is not *quite* happy. I went four times to her door to-day, at the distance of an hour every time, but she was in her closet at prayer. My faltering voice dared not betray itself at offering consolation. When I saw her swoln eyes, and pale cheeks, I grasped her proffered hand, but it was best for *both* that I should fly. I sprung from her, and hid my share of sorrow. She sent for her friend, Lady Alcondale, and in her faithful and affectionate bosom reposed her griefs. When the soul is immersed in care, the disclosure of it to *another self* lightens the load,

“ But the grief, which does not speak,
Whispers the o’er fraught heart, and bids it
break.”

At the setting out of the card table, Sir Frederick said to me, in a low voice, “ for God’s sake, let me speak to you for five minutes ! I am lost to eternity if you do not.” I replied, “ *I have vowed not to hear you again!*” Fortunately the entrance of his friend, Lord Trecourcy, at this very instant, took him from me. After his introduction to us all, a moment of tenderness between my intended Brother and Caroline carried the former out of the room, and his pleasing friend soon followed him. The whole house is so gay, ourselves excepted, that I believe no one has a suspicion of an aching heart under the roof. My absence was effected very easily, but I had not been in my apartment ten minutes when Lady Alcondale came to desire me to throw on my Sister’s wedding cloaths, which are enriched with pearls from Sir James

Saville, who wanted to see whether they were elegantly disposed of down the sides of the robe. I said I was too unwell to oblige her, and that I had retired to recover a violent head-ach which almost distracted me. "Only come to your Sister Caroline," said she, "and pity *her*, for she is so lacrymose, I really do not think she can appear below these two hours." I went to console her, but alas ! my kind intentions were ill-rewarded. "Sophia, my dear girl," said she, "if you will but have the goodness to comply with this last request I can make you, while my name is Clarendon, I will acknowledge the obligation to the last hour of my life: whatever it may cost me, I would comply with Sir James Saville's natural request, if I had not *you* to spare me. Think of my confusion, to exhibit prematurely before Lord Trecourcy, and four other strangers :—to *you* it would be nothing." Lady Alcondale assured me it could do my head no harm, and

confessed herself surprized at so unfeeling a denial of so *very* trifling a request:—that the conversation might take an unpleasant turn at her being decked out in bridals, when she expected a groaning, was the only reason why she did not put them on herself; and that poor foolish Maria was too sore with her Father's reproaches, to appear in such a garb. Miss Saville's size excluded her from assisting us in this difficult part, and she begged pardon if she expressed herself too strongly, when she said, my compliance with a request so trifling was a duty, my refusal a capriciousness, which gave my Sister pain. I accordingly undressed, and with Caroline on one side and Lady Alcondale on the other, was ushered into the drawing-room. To avoid Sir Frederick's eyes, I looked at any other object. I beheld Lord Trecourcy examine his friend with a keenness so scrutinizing, that I am certain he is a confidant. He never took his obser-

vation off that one object. It now became doubly incumbent on *me* to be gay, and I fear now I over did it. I have apprehension that every creature in the room saw I was acting a part, and a difficult part too. I am wretched least they all should have discovered what passed in my bleeding heart. Lord Alcondale had continued in the dinner parlour at chess with Maria Saville; so Sir James desired me to sit on, till they came up stairs.

Sir Frederick was affectedly lively; the conversation turned on the hold which *extreme* happiness or *extreme* misery had upon the memory. "It is wonderful," said he, "that a recollection of either one or t'other gives the *precise moment* to my mind in all its vivid colours; the *very* instant becomes as it were *present* to me, and the attendant joy or grief absolutely affects and touches me with the exact *same* degree of force." We all denied the possibility of this: the second impression was

weaker than the first, the third than the second. He replied, "that probably this reasoning was just with regard to other people, but all the argument in the world would not convince him against his own experience and his own feeling. "For example," said he, "I trust it is no news to any of this company to hear that I *have* been most passionately in love." "Don't blush, Miss Clarendon," said Sir James, "that I have had, in common with every other lover, doubts, despairs, jealousies, tortures ; at *one* moment (Miss Clarendon, I am sure, don't recollect it) I had them *all* combined ; my eternal peace or misery depended on *yes* or *no* : if the latter met my ears, I threw myself into my chaise, for God knows *what* destination, when in five minutes I wrote, and sought an opportunity of saying,

" Turn, fair barbarian, turn, and save
A wretch, who struggles in thy chain !
The tyrant, who torments his slave,
Sees death, beyond a certain pain ;

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And to his future interest true,
 Re-heals the wound, to bleed *anew*.
 Fair nymph, from dark example trace
 The inference my lines convey;
 Revoke my fate, and timely chase
 Despair, the tyrant of *my* day;
 Least *one* more stroke should seal the sufferer's
 doom,
 And dash thy cup of triumph yet to come."

I knew the moment was *present*, and too well comprehended the occasion of these verses, but had not strength to raise my eyes for many minutes. Lord Trecourcy's vivacity relieved all parties, by repeating four droll lines he made on some ridiculous occasion. Sir Frederick walked hastily out of the room, and I was not a little thankful to see his friend follow him. What a time of agitation did I pass upon reflecting on the previous conversation of the *post chaise* and *undetermined destination*! I had re-dressed myself, and sat at the top of the stairs, listening to every sound: not a carriage stirred without creating a thousand alarms. I antici-

pated the fatal moment when Lord Trecourcy would disclose to Caroline the perfidy of her lover, and possibly the duplicity of her Sister. Apprehension would have been insupportable, had not the consciousness of doing every thing for the best made me bear up under this accumulated load of horror.

At one moment I condemned myself for having concealed his baseness to *me*; at another, I justified that concealment, by reflecting that I should have wounded my Sister's peace. Imagine my terror when I heard Sir James Saville say, upon walking into the supper-room, "John, look in the study;" and Lord Alcondale repeat, "if the truant is not there, I shall suspect an elopement." I know not what happened, till I found myself sitting in the parlour, with the whole party busied about *me*; and learnt from Sir James, that there had been a hue and cry after *me* when

supper was announced, and that I was found on the stairs, in a fainting fit. I was soon perfectly well, and a glass of Madeira had raised my spirits. My mind was now easier than it had been: Caroline was more cheerful than I had seen her for some days, and her lover was all attention to her: he told us that he had been trying all his waist-coats on his friend, whose baggage was not arrived, and that he had fitted him very decently out for making his appearance at the ceremony. He then shewed us his clothes, which were just come home, the choice of Caroline. I saw him now apparently happy, and I blessed God that he was so, and that the storm, my imagination had conjured up to affright me, had so unexpectedly subsided. Heaven be praised! I shall not see him again till we meet in St. George's church, where, as Sir James Saville was married there, and Caroline's wedding is *its* anniversary, she thought it a little compliment to go. I only

wish it was *new*, for I am so strong and so composed just at *this* moment, that I should be the gayest of the whole set. I must conclude, for the watchman is now calling half past two o'clock. One more prayer to Heaven for two people exquisitely dear to me—*May God bless them!*—May Caroline make her amiable Husband *as* happy as I had endeavoured to do, had he been constant to vows due to me alone!—But I have forgot all this cruel, barbarous, inhuman traffic with my affections! Perhaps this sad letter will never reach you: I am sure it ought not—but you are a friend for *life*. Sir Frederick was a friend for a little while—and then what?—why, then he forgot me—Lord, Madam, that is a mere trifle! Well, I am now *very, very* happy—and *very, very* contented. I believe I have been asleep, for the watchman goes past three. Adieu, for ever and ever, says

SOPHIA IRWIN CLARENDON,

LETTER LXXXI.

FROM SIR JAMES SAVILLE TO THE EARL OF
ALCONDALE.

MY DEAR LORD,

I HAVE the very distressing task of acquainting you that our intended happiness is very unexpectedly clouded by the sudden illness of poor Sophia, who seemed to have recovered the fainting fit so perfectly before we parted last night. She lies so dangerously ill, that Dr. Hubertson entertains much apprehension for her. Do not let Lady Alcondale witness the distress of all here, but have the goodness to call, and acquaint the Bishop with the unfortunate circumstance; and if you let me see you here afterwards, I shall consider myself extremely obliged to you. I remain, my dear Lord, very faithfully and sincerely your's,

JAMES SAVILLE.

LETTER LXXXII.

FROM MR. MORTIMER TO MRS. MORTIMER, AT
PORTSMOUTH.

Harley-Street.

DEAR WIFE,

JUST as the clock struck ten this morning, while I was in the act of dressing myself to make one of the happy set in Grosvenor-Square, I got a line from Sir James Saville, to tell me all our gaities were postponed on account of poor Sophia's alarming indisposition. I hurried on my clothes, and immediately went there, and found the house in confusion and distress.— Dr Hubertson thinks her very dangerously ill. Last night, just as the supper entered, she was discovered on the stairs in a fainting fit, but to all appearance was perfectly recovered before we parted, and, I remarked,

uncommonly cheerful. Her maid says her Mistress bid her go to bed, and she would extinguish her own candle. About a quarter past three, Sophia opened her door, into the maid's room, and asked her to tell where she had hid the hartshorn. The girl got up, and as she was returning to her Mistress, Sophia fainted upon the floor. The noise brought Miss Clarendon and Miss Saville, who with great difficulty recovered her, and carried her back to her chamber, where they were surprised to find the bed had never been laid upon. Caroline sent instantly for Dr. Hubertson, who arrived at five, and found the poor girl delirious, in which state she now continues. I told them of Mrs Irwin's being at Portsmouth, and they join with me in wishing she could take the journey, as it would be a satisfaction to *her* at any rate; and should a favourable change, which is scarcely expected, take place, it might contri-

bute greatly towards forwarding Sophia's recovery.

I really am most sincerely concerned for all parties. Sir Frederick's man told me his Master was almost raving at Lord Alcondale's. I am glad he is there, for their friendship will be of service to him. I hope to see you with Mrs. Irwin, for I feel like a fish out of water without you.—Lose no time in writing, and make my affectionate good wishes to Irwin and his Wife. I remain, dear Wife, your affectionate Husband,

WILLIAM MORTIMER.

LETTER LXXXIII.

FROM LADY ALCONDALE TO MISS CLARENDON.

I NEED not tell you, my dear Caroline, that I am most truly concerned at the intelligence we have just now received from Sir James Saville. Had he not expressed a wish that I would not come, I should certainly have been with you myself instead of my letter. Poor Sophia looked so uncommonly well, that Lord Alcondale told her he was certain she had been at Maria's rouge box ; indeed I never saw her so animated as she was after supper. I quite reproach myself for having persuaded her to dress, as even that might have encreased her head-ach. Lord Alcondale is gone to the Bishop, and means afterwards to see my dear girl.

Sir Frederick's disappointment makes quite a woman of him; he has cried like a child ever since the letter arrived, and is now pacing up and down his room like a madman. Lord Trecourcy came true to the appointment of last night, and shares in the general concern. To counterbalance this distressing event, Mr. Mortimer has given the pleasing tidings of the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Irwin. Sincerely do I wish they may be able to come immediately to town, trusting that the natural health and youth of Sophia will bear her through the attack we now lament: I think Mrs. Irwin's presence would aid her recovery almost as much as medicine.

Lord Alcondale is returned from Sir James's.—My dear girl, what can I say to afford you consolation? There is nothing but submission, my loved friend, on our parts. I fear I can do you no real service; if I could, I flatter

myself you would command me. The crisis *may* be favourable, notwithstanding the height of the fever at present. Lord Trecourcy is indeed a very active friend, he has undertaken to set out as soon as ever the horses can be put to a hired chaise, to conduct Mrs. Irwin up to town. Poor Sir Frederick is in ten different minds in the space of an hour : his friend says he means to go to the Square; I mention the following article as something to employ your thoughts upon, to obliterate a still greater evil. General Belgrave is now perfectly reconciled to his Son ; has not only cancelled all former resentments, but given him, in consequence of your connexion with Sir Frederick, full liberty to decline the union between himself and Lady Annamaria Alban. There is a revolution little looked for ! Heaven grant it may be permanent, for I dare not feel *secure*, as your marriage is delayed ! I shall stop at your door in my way to Mrs.

Saville's, only to learn how Sophia is. Keep up your spirits as much as possible, I entreat you :—hope the best.—Who is that very handsome man I have met with Maria Saville at three places to-day? I fear there is something wrong, and Sir James Saville is too attentive to all his friends, to justify them for one oversight where his peace is concerned.—He looks an improper acquaintance for her, and her confusion, when I met them, convinces me there is something amiss. Adieu, dearest girl!—believe me, with a most faithful and affectionate heart, your friend,

M. ALCONDALE.

LETTER LXXXIV.

FROM LORD TRECURCY TO SIR FREDERICK
HAMBLEDON.

Portsmouth.

DEAR HAMBLEDON,

AFTER spending but one short hour at Mrs Saville's, I pursued my journey to this place, and had an immediate introduction to Mr. Irwin, from whom I received a very obliging reception. I lost no time in communicating every article you charged me with, and have in return his acknowledgement that *all* your conjectures are true; and that his only motives for this unjustifiable step was to serve two people he had an almost paternal regard for. Of this you cannot entertain the smallest doubt, when you behold the distress the bare recital of it occasions him, and hear the severe, and,

I must own, merited censures he bestows on this lamented action. If Sophia does not recover, he will be still more wretched than yourself :—but to you I am certain this is no satisfaction. He extenuates his conduct by saying, “ he sincerely meant to serve both parties, and to spare you many hours of unhappiness, by nipping this passion at an early hour. He saw with concern that your infant affections were *mutual*, and knew that advice or argument would fan, instead of destroying, the flame : he considered that your pay was the only thing you had to depend upon ; for you had often told him your Uncle, Sir Arthur, never troubled his head about you, so that he had nothing to hope for from *him*, had you married a girl without money. These reflections made him resolve to separate you, and induced him to send you, through the interposition of Stourton, on that memorable expedition against the Rajah. He knew mi-

sery would be the portion of such a marriage, without even a decent provision; and he even applauded himself for this great act of friendship to you *both*, which, in fact, was repugnant to his principles. "Desperate diseases require desperate remedies," said he. That the one I administered is of this nature, afflicts me most poignantly:—assure Sir Frederick my regrets will accompany me to the grave. Separate from the sorrows I *have* already plunged *him* into, I must be the means of rendering either Sophia or Caroline wretched for life. Indeed, my dear Lord, I am convinced the paralytic stroke that I had at Bengal was in consequence of the compunction I felt at hearing the young man had taken this disappointment so much to heart, that he flung up his commission sooner than spend another day in the place. The faded cheek of Sophia was a perpetual memento, that "one ought not to do *wrong*, that *good* may come

of it." He would willingly come up to town, but his legs are swelled to so immoderate a size from the long confinement on ship-board, that they must gradually subside before he takes such exercise as a carriage would give him. Mrs. Irwin is now on the road ; I shall certainly see you to-morrow evening : every thing may yet turn out well for *you*, in which case, my pity changes its object from Sophia to Caroline.

I have omitted nothing that you charged me with, but cannot lengthen my letter. Farewell !

Believe me most sincerely your's,

TRECOURCY.

LETTER LXXXV.

FROM MRS. IRWIN TO MR. IRWIN, AT
PORTSMOUTH.

Grosvenor-Square.

YOU will be impatient, my dear Husband, to hear that I arrived safe at Sir James Saville's at seven last night; but was, unfortunately, too late for the post. My heart beat so violently when I entered the Square, that I could not speak for apprehension; but Caroline's appearance in the hall raised my hopes; the fever is wonderfully abated. I have not seen the dear child yet, nor shall attempt it till Dr. Hubertson advises it, as it might agitate her very prejudicially. I sat an hour in the next chamber this morning, and heard her ask Caroline when a packet would sail for India? who replied, in a few

days. She then bid her open her letter-case, and take out letters to me which were sealed, and enclose them in one cover, to be taken to the India House. These letters I have read: my astonishment, I find, you may guess at from Lord Trecourcy's visit to Portsmouth. They saved me from a surprise at seeing my old friend Fitzcharles metamorphosed into Sir Frederick Hambledon. I instantly read them to Sir James, whose amazement I cannot express. He fears to take any steps at present, from regard to poor Caroline.

Poor dears! I do think Heaven has interposed to bring them together, till dear Caroline's unmerited punishment does away the persuasion. I leave every thing to Sir James, who is better calculated to manage this difficult affair judiciously than I am. He has been discoursing with Sir Frederick, and condemning him for secrecy when

they met; but the ill-treatment he *believed* he had received from Sophia, who had encouraged him, is a thorough reason and vindication for his silence. Lord Trecourcy's letter arrived this morning. I was ignorant of its contents, till the warmth of my vindication of *you* induced Sir James Saville to tell me, "you had desired Lord Trecourcy to acknowledge that you had done all with the view of serving the parties." Whoever knows you, my dear, will believe you was actuated by benevolent views, however unfortunate they may prove in the event. The dear child is somewhat better during the last hour. She asked Caroline to draw off her glove: having done so, she said, "I expected to see a ring." What, my dear girl, when you are unable to be my bride-maid! Pray do not think so ill of me—perhaps it will be postponed to the next twelfth of December,—who can tell? She was silent for some minutes, when

she broke it, she said very emphatically,—“ God grant you much happiness, Caroline, whether *I* witness it or not!” Since this, she has been in a half doze. I have strong hope all will yet be well. My dear Husband, let me hear frequently of you, for else I shall certainly leave the dear Sophia, and return to you. I mean this as a *threat*, for I am sure you are more pleased with my absence, upon such an occasion, than with my attendance upon you. I trust you enter on airings about Saturday or Sunday : do not exceed five miles, I beseech you, at first. I am too much hurried and fatigued to give you any particulars of the good people belonging to this hospitable dwelling ; Sir James and Miss Saville are all attention ; the youngest girl I have scarcely had a glimpse of. Caroline Clarendon I think still handsomer than her Sister, but a very different kind of beauty ; her countenance is one Angelica Kauffman would

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single out for Lady Jean Grey to wear five minutes after her petition was granted ; it seems as if the transport of good news was *chastened* by reflection. But you must see her, to know whether this opinion is just. For our comfort, I do not believe Caroline will take her disappointment too much to heart. Her former attachment to Belgrave is in this instance a blessing. I must conclude with the wish that you may take very particular care to avoid cold, and be able to rejoin your very dutiful and affectionate Wife,

SOPHIA IRWIN.

LETTER LXXXVI.

FROM CAPTAIN DENNIS O'REILLY TO MISS
MARIA SAVILLE.

ADORED ANGEL,

Gracian Coffee-house.

HERE have I walked day and night, hot and cold, winter and summer, any time this last fortnight, to get at the speech of my charming, blooming Maria. Your bright eyes have scorched up my heart, which has become the very forge of Vulcan, where Cupid's arrows are pointed on purpose to transfix the poor little fluttering Dennis O'Reilly. Have compassion, my charmer, and hasten the hour when a man, who adores you beyond wealth or titles, may lead you to the altar of Hymen, my jewel.

What do you think brought me to London, dear creature? Why, reading in the news that one Mr. Charles Seymour was bold enough to enter the lists

with Dennis O'Reilly, to obtain his adorable queen ; so I put a certain little piece of paper into my pocket, signed by your own lily-white hand, with the view of employing my lawyer ; for you know, now, were you false hearted, you would lose five thousand pounds, and a gentleman, who, though he says it himself, is a very great, a very brave, and a very honourable man in his own country. The Duke of Leinster excepted, there is not another, of the same rank, in the whole kingdom of Ireland, that will not be proud to call you *dear Cousin*. The scars which I bear, for the good of my country, are as plentiful and as thick as plums in a cheese-cake, fair creature. I do not condescend to desire to be known to your family ; for why, do you see ? Sir James Saville has abused my dear Ireland, and I would not, being a stranger, like to be his intimate friend before I know him. Out of tender consideration for my angelic fair one, the

blood of O'Reilly will match with his house ; but I never will exchange a sentence with a person inimical to Ireland till my duty obliges me to call him my Father.

Had that same Mr. Seymour robbed O'Reilly of his Wife before he was married, I would have killed him like a gentleman, and he should have said so, or I would have eat him. I beseech you to meet me in Bond street to-morrow, where I shall wait from ten in the morning till four, for I have a great deal of business to converse with you on. Keep true to your promise of concealing all from your Sister, for I see she has a little twinkling regard for your lover, and jealousy might urge her to rob her own Sister of a gentleman the first Lord in the land would give his own child to. Either write or come, dear creature, to fix the destiny of your adoring, and I hope I may say your adored lover,

DENNIS O'REILLY.

LETTER LXXXVII.

FROM MISS CAROLINE CLARENDON TO LADY
ALCONDALE.

THANK Heaven! Dr. Hubertson gives us the most comfortable assurances that dear Sophia is out of danger. She has seen Mrs. Irwin, and seems quite composed. Sir James managed every thing delightfully!—broke the agreeable news so gently and so cleverly, that she was scarcely flurried. They are now together, and I am going to seek a little sleep, for I have not been on a bed for the last two nights, and my head aches abominably. I feel myself so consoled, so easy in my mind, that I am sure I shall sleep; yet I could not attempt *this* till I had made you acquainted with the general joy. In the evening I hope to see you for an hour. Mrs. Irwin and Sophia will

think me an intruder if I break in upon the conversation, so I leave them to enjoy their mutual congratulations.

I must tell you of a very singular speech of Sir James Saville, which, as he never speaks any one sentence *accidentally*, has made an odd impression upon me: you recollect he called me Lady Hambledon on the day previous to that fixed on for the wedding, as *he* said, to accustom himself to it, and escape forfeits. This morning he said, "dear Miss Clarendon, ring the bell!" "Aye," said I, "that is as it ought to be—a few days ago, and we all believed my retaining this name was impossible." "True," he replied, "nothing is certain; this event is now only *postponed to appearance*, but it may *never* take place—God knows!" His making this remark surprises me. I was silent, but my heart exulted. I know you will lecture me, but to think aloud is natural to me. How inconsistent is Sir

Frederick! *you* tell me he raves like a madman; and to *me*, he has never even regretted it in words, though he has in effect. Sir James and he are in wonderful confabulation. My two reprieves have raised my spirits, and if I speak the language of my heart, poor Belgrave's reconciliation with his Father, and permission to leave a woman he had no predilection for, has a large share in my present tranquillity. I must, however, lay down for an hour. All the world have left cards at the house in Portland-place for Sir Frederick and Lady Hambleton, which astonishes me, for such an event as the delay and its cause, one would imagine, could be no secret. Adieu, my dearest friend! I am truly and sincerely your obliged

CAROLINE CLARENDON.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

FROM MISS MARIA SAVILLE TO THE COUN-
TESS OF STAFFORDSON.

Grosvenor-Square.

MY DEAR LADY STAFFORDSON,

I KNOW you must have heard all the wonderful news from Lord Trecourcy about Sir Frederick Hambledon and Sophia. I have not five minutes time to write. Sir Frederick, you know, can never make me his Wife now ; so the bond can never be of any service to you: therefore I beg you to burn it immediately.

The last time I saw you I told you my fears about O'Reilly ; he is lately come up to town, and wrote me the *sweetest* letter that *ever* was written. He sincerely loves me, I am certain, but I must be prudent, and try to regain that paper I was foolish enough to

give him at Harrowgate. I have a very great regard for him, but I do think I may make a greater match by waiting through next winter. I am afraid of meeting him alone, because the servant may tell, as I have met him accidentally three times already, and Mother Alcondale saw us together ; so that I dread to meet her again without having a friend with me. If you will go and try to persuade him to give up the promissory note I will love you for ever. Obtain *that* for me, my dear friend, and I will give you one thousand pounds on the day I come of age. Supposing you will accompany me, I will (unless you cannot comply with my request) be with you at one o'clock to morrow, and take a seat in your carriage. We can take Captain O'Reilly up, and go a long airing. For Heaven's sake do not write ! for were I found out writing to any body I should be killed. I can walk to you at any rate. Should you think proper to invite him to your

house, it would make every thing easy.
Adieu, my dearest friend ! believe me
to be your truly obliged

MARIA SAVILLE.

P. S. I do fear Captain Belgrave never
got the letter signed c. c. for he never
came. Adieu again.

LETTER LXXXIX.

FROM LADY ALCONDALE TO MISS CAROLINE
CLARENDON.

Berkley-Square.

AT my return from my dear Caro-
line last night we found a note upon the
table from Belgrave to Lord Alcon-
dale, to desire him to repair to the Gene-
ral's the instant he got it, let the hour
be ever so late : he went accordingly,
and continued there all night. From the
note we learn, that his Father had had a
fall from his horse, but that, one slight
bruise excepted, he did not seem much

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hurt. His son made him be instantly blooded, and a friend's carriage conveyed them home. Two minutes before they arrived at their own door, General Belgrave became speechless, and has continued so ever since. I find there are no hopes, but I have not seen my Husband since; therefore this account I got from the servant this morning, who went on the message of enquiry.

I imagined this news, from the lips of any other person, would hurry you, and therefore I write—I am rejoiced to hear Sophia continues mending. I spend the day with Lady Barrycourt in Grosvenor-Square, so shall make my enquiries after your Sister again as I return home. Lord Alcondale gave me a solution to many wonderful riddles as I came hither last night, and I long to hear more from you. Adieu, my dear girl!—ever your's sincerely,

M. ALCONDALE.

LETTER XC.

FROM THE EARL OF ALCONDALE TO
SIR JAMES SAVILLE.

Berkeley-Square.

DEAR SIR JAMES,

I BELIEVE we have reason to rejoice very sincerely that the marriage between your Wards did *not* take place. The following event will justify this opinion, as Captain Belgrave is now sole heir to his late Father's fortune. His Son received, in *my* presence, his Father's permission to marry Miss Clarendon, whose very particular situation I mentioned to him during the two hours he was restored to speech and reason, previous to his death.

I trust you will do me the favour to communicate this intelligence to Miss Clarendon, as the scene I have just

witnessed has affected me extremely, and makes me unfit to leave the house at present. In the evening we shall both have the pleasure of passing an hour with you; and I shall deliver to my fair friend a commission Captain Belgrave has charged me with. My Wife, who longs to get to Caroline, forbears writing till this agreeable intelligence is opened to her. She joins me in hoping that happiness is within the grasp of all parties. I have the honour to remain at all times, dear Sir James, your very affectionate humble servant,

ALCONDALE.

LETTER XCI.

FROM MISS CLARENDON TO THE COUNTESS
OF ALCONDALE.

MY dear friend, preserve me from a painful excess of joy ! I really cannot bear it. Is it possible ? — I fear I do not deserve this unbounded happiness, this unlooked for change ! — His naming *me* is so wonderful ! — I would never have married Belgrave without his Father had mentioned *me* identically ; the threatened curse would have haunted me. — I must take time to respire. I was weak enough to despair. but I think I never shall commit that crime again.

I seized my pen, after writing the above, to address five lines to Sir Fre-

derick. I wrote and tore, wrote and tore half a dozen pages ; but at length I told him, “ the attachment my heart had long felt for another, the obstacles which had arisen, the permission Belgrave’s Father had granted, and the regret that my conduct might not only appear reprehensible in his eyes, but involve his future peace :— in short, every thing honour and truth required of me.” I gave it him with fear and trembling. Form to yourself my surprise, when I saw him read the letter *first*, then kiss it with transport ! Every thing is *now* explained to me ; and the first salute I ever received pleasure from, when Sir Frederick gave it, was *now*. We are all delighted. Sir James is gone to Belgrave, and Mrs. Irwin is breaking the whole (novel I may call it) to dear Sophia, whose sufferings deserve the reward of passing her life with the man she so justly loves. Indeed he is so perfectly amiable, that I am rejoiced in a two-fold sense to call

him Brother. Another circumstance delights me ; no other than the forfeiture of my fortune to Sir James's Daughters, This worthy man carried his opposition higher to my union with Belgrave, from motives of disinterestedness—my Father's opinion of his integrity has indeed been justified.

What have we all endured ! Well—the suffering part, I trust, is over ; but we have all experienced much anguish of heart, and yet none of us were culpable. I must see you very, very soon ; till when farewell ! I am too, too happy just now !—but ever your's,

CAROLINE CLARENDON.

LETTER XCII.

FROM THE COUNTESS OF STAFFORDSON TO
DENNIS O'REILLY, ESQ. GRECIAN COFFEE-
HOUSE.

Bedford-Square.

SIR,

I HAVE waited at home all yesterday-evening, and the best part of this morning, expecting to receive your final answer; instead of which I have just now read a very extraordinary proposal to relinquish half the sum I specified as the satisfaction I expected for undertaking a very dangerous, difficult, and disagreeable task; which I should never have done, had I not formed a very flattering opinion of Captain O'Reilly's disinterested attachment to my charming young friend, at first sight.

I trust, Sir, you will give me credit for reposing the utmost confidence in your honour ; but the situation and character of a married woman, whose Husband deserts her, are of so *nice* a nature, that they cannot be too closely guarded. The bare mention of my name, in a transaction of *this* nature, would distress me to an almost undescribable degree ; but to a person of your discernment I need not enlarge upon this subject. I proceed to restate the conditions I proposed to you, which were, that you should pay immediately into my hands the sum of two thousand pounds, for my own use, without any writing whatever passing between us upon the occasion, previous to my undertaking to bring about an elopement, which I will promise to *effect* for you. I am sorry these unconscionable money-lenders should exact so enormous an interest ; but, nevertheless, it does not alter my terms or my determination. You are your own

judge, Sir; do what you most approve, but favour me with the result some time in the course of this evening, as I am preparing for Brussels, which place I hope to reach in the beginning of next week:

Perhaps you have not heard, Sir, that our sweet young friend has succeeded within these two days to half a very large forfeited estate, in addition to the fifteen thousand pounds she inherits from her Mother. I request you to return me *this* letter, and also the three which you have already received. Should this transaction meet with your acquiescence, you may depend upon every friendly exertion on my part to introduce you to the fashionable world. I am, Sir, with sincere good wishes, your very humble servant,

A. STAFFORDSON.

LETTER XCH.

FROM AUGUSTUS BELGRAVE, ESQ. TO MISS
CAROLINE CLARENDON.

Portland-Place.

EXTREME as the impatience my heart feels at this instant is to prostrate myself at the feet of my first and only adored Caroline, yet it is checked by the dread of meeting a severe reception after my silence and neglect of her letter of the eleventh instant. I will only use those arguments which arose in my mind at the moment of perusal, and depend upon Miss Clarendon's candour to extenuate my fault. I will own to you, my dear friend, that I considered this precipitate step as the impulse of the minute, and doubted not that you would condemn yourself upon reflection, as the threatened curse

bad so often withheld you from promising to be mine, even should my Father put me in possession of his fortune. A second reason, (for I will be candid) was the encouragement and promise you had given a man of whom report has spoken very highly, and a due consideration of the injustice of such an act. But perhaps these considerations had not withheld me from such a temptation, unless my poor Father had in that *very* hour told me, he now placed so great a confidence in my honour, that he was secure I would never embitter another day of his life. To him, my amiable friend, I shewed your letter ; and in consequence of my conduct in foregoing the first wish of my heart, he gave me permission to remain single : and afterwards, in Lord Alcondale's presence, who had explained the mysterious cause of your Sister's malady, he added, that he *only* wished to live long enough to unite the hands of Miss Clarendon and his Son. Be

persuaded, my most amiable, most loved Caroline, that no other being in the world, (not even Lord Alcondale) has beheld the letter which proves me to be so particularly honoured with your esteem and affection. At present it would be improper to quit the house; but if you will suffer the culprit to make oral confession, to-morrow evening he will cast himself on the mercy of his fair *judge*, as well as accuser. But unless you *allow* me to appear before you, my coward heart will anticipate a reception which adds bitterness in idea to the present sad moment. Remember, most exquisitely loved, that my happiness or misery, *each* in extreme, depends upon your forgiveness of my designed silence. Let me be permitted to assure you, that difficulties have, if possible, increased the affection of your most faithful

AUGUSTUS BELGRAVE.

LETTER XCIV.

MRS. IRWIN TO MR. IRWIN, AT PORTSMOUTH.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

Grosvenor-Square.

YOUR letter gave me sincere pleasure to learn that you have made so rapid a progress in getting well ; which gives me hope, that taking the journey three days earlier than you proposed, will do you no harm. My reason for wishing this very earnestly is, the extreme concern and dejection of our worthy old friend, Sir James Saville, who is quite inconsolable at the rash and inconsiderate step of his youngest Daughter, Maria. She has eloped with an adventurer, who has only a handsome person to counterbalance a very infamous character. We are all so distressed for Sir James, that we have not the power to converse

upon any topic of indifference. *Your* arrival, and Mrs. Mortimer's, would compel him to think of something less painful than this undutiful girl's ingratitude to so excellent a Parent. Our sweet girls are unremitting in their attention to this paternal friend. Concern for him has flung poor Sophia some days back ; but the tenderness of her lover, which is beautiful in every respect, is better than medicine.

This evening Belgrave sees his fair one ; and even Sir James enters into the delight each party will experience. Lady Alcondale had pressed the young people to let their wedding take place before her confinement ; but this cruel event of the elopement has silenced us all for the present. The whole affair has been traced to its source : the girl got acquainted with O'Reilly at Harrowgate, and he followed her up to town. Lady Staffordson, who has wisely taken herself off to Brussels, and

is a very bad hearted woman, managed the whole affair: for what purpose no creature can tell, as the man is almost pennyless, and under very evil report. We hear that he was a Lieutenant in a marching regiment, but was broke for striking his superior officer, and has subsisted ever since upon the bounty of a Sister, who keeps a milliner's shop somewhere in the City, and who figures away at times in a very elegant carriage, at the expence of her reputation. This carriage the Brother sported at this end of the town as his own, and the wretched, headstrong girl was caught with appearances, and betrayed, to her lasting sorrow, I doubt not. Every step to overtake them was ineffectual, as you will suppose; for she eluded suspicion by a dinner engagement at Mrs. Saville's, whose house she quitted at eight, under pretext of returning home: a post-chaise and four waited in Oxford-road, with three men on horse-back, so that a pursuit might have proved desperate.

Mr. Mortimer sent the next day his own man to meet these fugitives on the North road, and to say, that if they will immediately repair to him, he will do the best he can for them. To-day he has told us that he will try to prevail on Sir James to give them a couple of hundreds yearly, provided they go to live in the country, and a promise of a trifling addition, if they live quietly and decently. At present we advised him to suspend this attempt, for the poor man is unable to bear the conversation; when they arrive it will be time enough. Till the poor fool is of age, she is not entitled to either the forfeited fortune, or her mother's fifteen thousand pounds; and *then* only if she marries with her Father's approbation. I truly hope you will make your entrance among us in a few days, as the hours seem very long during our separation. Adieu, my dear Husband! Be assured I am your very dutiful and affectionate Wife,

SOPHIA IRWIN.

LETTER XCV.

FROM MISS CAROLINE CLARENDON TO
AUGUSTUS BELGRAVE, ESQ.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

I REALLY am so amazed at the contents of your letter, and the extraordinary pardon you ask for your silence to a letter from me, that I know no other method of answering you so ready as truth, which leads me to assure you instantly, upon my *word of honour*, that I never directly or indirectly have wrote or sent to you since the solemn final farewell letter of near a year ago. I find, however, my name has been used, and whatever indignation I feel at the infamous but unknown contriver of so cruel a transaction, it is still less than the chagrin I indure at *your* believing me capable of so bad, so unjust an action, or of duplicity to any creature whatever! but to have deceived an amiable and worthy man, which Sir

Frederick Hambledon most certainly is, would have been an act of double criminality ; yet ought I to feel all this resentment, since it has given me a new proof of the rectitude of your principles. Indeed, my heart was so convinced of your virtues, that it required no *waste* exertion, on your part, to encrease my well-placed prodigality of esteem, regard, and affection.

How amply has your poor Father compensated for all the affliction we have both so keenly experienced, by this last act of sanctioning our union ; and permitted by *him* to be the means, I trust, of blessing, not cursing the amiable being I have so unalterably loved ! It seems too great a happiness for reality : if it is only a dream, Heaven grant I may never wake from it !

In this moment of sincere heart-felt contentment, I dread lest time, opportunity, and a further acquaintance with

my deficiencies should convince you, that your imagination had led you into error; that your judgment and eye-sight conspired alike to deceive you, by blinding you to every defect, and magnifying every trifling merit from a mole-hill to a mountain. I *only* know, that my endeavours to justify you to *yourself* for this predilection will never abate. I am not prude enough to say only I shall be happy to see you—no, in the native, undisguised language of my heart, I avow my impatience to see you, and to assure you that you possess a larger share of friendship, regard, and unalterable affection, than my pen can express; and that whatever circumstance has occurred since we last parted, to render this assurance doubtful, yet that I have invariably been your *faithful* and unalterable friend,

CAROLINE CLARENDON.

LETTER XCVI.

FROM MR. MORTIMER TO SIR JAMES
SAVILLE, BART.

Harley-street.

DEAR SIR JAMES,

THE culprit and her husband are now under my roof—your Daughter roaring her eyes out at your determination never to see her again. The man seems to throw himself upon our mercy, and has given me his own history, which I will not distress you by repeating, and discovered a scene of baseness and villainy worthy of the infamous contriver, Lady Staffordson, who has reached Brussels by this time, to squander the money she got by the sale of your Daughter. I only lament, that the laws are deficient, and that such an unprincipled wretch is suffered to retain the money, so basely, so treacherously procured. Maria is not so open or so communicative as O'Reilly, so that I

cannot learn all: but *her* surprize was as great as my own at hearing her Husband declare that this deceitful, mercenary friend exacted two thousand pounds as the price to be paid before she effected the elopement. I say nothing in vindication of the girl, because I trust you will perceive every possible circumstance of extenuation, at least as quick as her Uncle; but to be sure, she has become a prey to consummate hypocrisy and art. Upon my soul, Sir James, I pity her, though she merits her fate. As to the man, I have only to place myself in his situation, to furnish an excuse for him, though my indignation is violent against him: the fellow wanted bread; and though we lament and condemn to eternity, we should either of *us*, in the same case, have accepted a willing girl with a good fortune. My Wife will relate every thing to you in the morning, for I have little inclination to write upon so unpleasing a subject. I have only to say that what is done cannot be un-

done, and that though she is still blameable, most condemnable, she is, nevertheless, your child: her unkind conduct towards you would be no justification of your's to her. Pardon me, dear Sir James, I wish to preserve you from after regrets. This will be effected by affording her a competence to preserve her from a Husband's resentment, and to keep her from dangerous temptations. Her personal beauty will make her the mark to fly at—The country might bring her back to reflection, and a lure might be held forth to each party, to entice them to virtue, and to make it worth their while to conduct themselves cautiously for the future.

I perhaps am doing wrong in delivering my sentiments, unasked by you; but let my sincere friendship furnish you with an apology for me. Did her relations abandon her, every error she may commit, in consequence of it, is in

fact to be laid at their doors. I am quite concerned to find you remain so indifferent. With best love and good wishes, I remain, my dear Sir James, most affectionately your's

W. MORTIMER.

LETTER XCVII.

FROM SIR JAMES SAVILLE TO WILLIAM MORTIMER, ESQ.

Grosvenor-square.

MY DEAR SIR,

THE introduction of company last night at the instant I received your letter, prevented my acknowledgment of it; and another more powerful truth is, that my feelings were too cruelly agitated upon reading the contents, to allow of my replying to it in the morning. Be convinced that I receive all your exertions as friendship; all your opinions as those (could we change places) I should lay before you. But I had predetermined my conduct, and commu-

• nicate it to you, to make known to the destroyer of her fond indulgent Father's repose my *resolution* never to see her more. Her being deceived by the abandoned woman, her pretended friend, proves that this unhappy, unprincipled girl's conduct has been one continued course of duplicity. I commanded her never to exchange even a bow with her. She rebelled, she despised the advice of a parent wrapt up in his children, who could have no interest but theirs for his approbation or censures: she has cast me off as a father and friend, and embittered the evening of a life, which hoped to have found its happiness in seeing her amiable and respected. If I touch upon the anguish which empoisons my peace at the return my indulgence has met with, I should be acquitted by you for casting her off for *ever*; but believe me, my friend, such a design has never existed in my breast. I mean to place her above want, but without superflui-

ty: her marriage, without my acquiescence, excludes her wholly from any right to her estimable Mother's fifteen thousand pounds. Miss Caroline Clarendon's forfeited property is determinable by the same rule. I need not tell you, that the heirs of Sir Frederick Hambledon and Capt. Belgrave shall receive, at my death, a recompence for their Grandfather Clarendon's bequest to my children.

I will trouble you, dear Sir, with my intentions, which are, to allow this disobedient young woman two hundred a year, *upon condition* that she instantly leaves London, and secludes herself from a world she is no longer intitled to appear in; that she resides in some village, where she may be safe from temptation, and preserve me and the rest of her *former* family from any recollection about her; and that her behaviour to the person she has sacrificed the happiness of a Father to may atone

to Heaven for her ingratitude to me. Upon these conditions, and *no other*, she shall receive this annuity, to be paid quarterly at my Banker's. But if she should make any hesitation upon the subject, I beseech you not to give me the particulars, but intimate to me that I need not speak to my Banker.

My dear Sir, nothing less than the attention of the only child I have now in the world, my dutiful Fanny, and my amiable Wards, could have enabled me to recover from the barbarity of this deluded young woman's conduct. But I must hasten to quit a subject I have so much real sorrow and anguish of soul in contemplating. With affectionate thanks for your friendly letter, I remain, my dear Sir, your very obliged friend

JAMES SAVILLE.

LETTER XCVIII.

FROM MISS FANNY SAVILLE TO MRS.
O'REILLY.

DECEIVED as I am, and injured as I have ever been by your whole conduct towards me, Maria, (of which I have never even breathed a complaint to a mortal) yet I cannot forget that you are still my Sister, the child of the same Father and Mother. Dejected and depressed as my spirits are, I cannot avoid the strong impulse nature has planted in my heart to render you service. Blinded as I am by my tears, which make my writing almost illegible, I hasten to pour some balm into the wounds which my sorrowing Father's letter to Mr. Mortimer will plant in your heart, which, I sincerely hope, is less corrupted than your judg-

ment, which you have placed in such infamous hands. It is now too late to upraid you, Maria:—it is not, to forgive you every unkindness you have hitherto shewn me. *As* your Sister, I still feel an interest in whatever concerns you; but I have received an intimation that my Father, (whom I never yet deceived,) expects me to forbear having any intercourse with you. For the first time in my life I descend to prevaricate. I write, before I *am* forbidden, to tell you, that it still remains in your power to wipe off the odium you have acquired, in some degree. Let your future conduct, at least, be irreproachable; consider the vow you have taken to adhere to your Husband, and perform it with earnestness. His deception of *you* does not exempt you from duty to *him*. Remember that an unwearied course of proper behaviour on your part will secure an annual present of a hundred pounds, unknown to a creature, unless

278 THE POSTHUMOUS DAUGHTER.

I should marry: in that case I have no concealments.

My heart, Maria, despairs of a Father's forgiveness for you; but should that unlooked for, unexpected moment arrive, be persuaded, I will improve it to your advantage. Judging of another by my own standard, I dread lest his death, without previous pardon, should embitter every hour of your life. Do not write, I beseech you, to me. I dare not disobey my Father. When I can essentially serve you, you may depend upon my inclination. I am, with truth, your very afflicted Sister,

FANNY SAVILLE.

LETTER XCIX.

FROM LADY ALCONDALE TO MISS CAROLINE
CLARENDON.

Berkley-Square.

WHAT with dinners, concerts, and cards, I think there is no opportunity of seeing one's friends! I tried to quit Lady Barrycourt's party last night to spend half an hour with you, but I found it impossible:—the Russian Princess and her daughters came in, and a new table was placed. The Marquis, Lord Francis, and I, were preparing to return home to supper at a quarter before eleven, when my good relative seized on my arm, and led me, much against my will, to the table, where I played a couple of rubbers, and won as many guineas for my pains. I was obliged to be resolute, or else I believe

this northern brunette would have played on till now.

I have had many visitors this morning ; thanks, in some measure, are owing to you, for I found the general motive was curiosity. " Lord ! Niece," said my Aunt, " why did not you tell me the news ?" " What news ?" I replied. " Why, the rupture between your sentimental friend Caroline and Sir Frederick Hambledon ; Jack Seymour has told me every thing, but I had rather have been obliged to you." I replied, " if Jack Seymour has amused himself at your Grace's expence, it is what he has constantly done before, so I am only surprized you can credit him. Dear Aunt, did not he knock you up at two in the morning, a twelvemonth ago, and tell you my Husband was appointed Ambassador to the Cherokee Nation, when you kindly entreated me to leave my boy in your hands ? Did not he tell

you for serious truth, that Sir James Saville had privately married his Ward, and carried her over to France? And did you not go to a milliner's shop in Basinghall-street, to see the Queen of France in disguise? He has played your Grace fifty of these humorous tricks, and yet you come to me with believing his story." She has determined to play him some trick in revenge; what it is to be I know not, but she does not seem to be quite on good terms with this mad-cap nephew of Lord Alcondale.

Both Belgrave and Sir Frederick have entreated me to shew *you* the inhumanity of punishing *them* for Maria's delinquency; they repeated your arguments to me, not one of which I allow to be good—quite the reverse. Sir James Saville's dejection should be expelled by amusement: these matrimonial gaieties would enliven *his* hours in the first place, and in the second,

secure my attendance. I am in very good spirits, but it is possible that my confinement might make a *sable* delay, and your swains would be punished again. Be assured I will not hear of any delays, which I shall make known to you *all* at Mr. Mortimer's dinner on Friday.

Mr. Mortimer has told me that Sir James Saville has acted, as usual, in a generous manner by this foolish, unfortunate girl. Mrs. Mortimer wished it was tied down in such a way as to be cancelled, if ever O'Reilly or his precious Wife received the milliner Sister, who is mistress to one of the Aldermen. Mr. Irwin's sentiments upon this occasion gave me much pleasure. "Mrs. Mortimer will pardon me," said he, "if I differ from her in opinion:—O'Reilly has received favour, support, and protection from this woman: though she acquired the means by disreputable courses, let him

avoid ingratitude, the foulest of all crimes, or rather the combination of all in one. In the second place, there is something so sacred in these natural connections, that no injury, in my opinion, is a sufficient plea for neglect of kind offices. I speak very strong, perhaps, but I *think* as I *speak*. I knew a woman who quarrelled with all her Husband's relations, his Father, his Mother, his Brothers, and Sisters ; and what was the consequence ? The world condemned him, but it despised his Wife ; she died unloved and unpitied, and her Husband is now respected and cherished by all his relations. Let her be kind to her Husband's family, even though they *are* undeserving—caution her against appearing with this woman, but let her assist her in the hour of distress. I entreat you, my good friends, to hear and receive this wise rule, the neglect of which has given me a lasting regret—"Do not do wrong, that good may come of it."

I have wrote a little volume, and I shall not leave you without insisting anew on your taking my case into immediate consideration, and enabling me to *figure* away at the weddings without further loss of time. Sir Frederick is beating up for volunteers. Lord Tre-courcy is now at old Mrs. Saville's, to trepan Lady Lucy into the company. Beaumont, I find, despairs of an appointment in the matrimonial regiment. What a gossip! here comes my Lord, and so you are released. Adieu, my dear girl!—you know I am truly your's ever,

M. ALCONDALE.

CHAPTER C.

FROM MR. MORTIMER TO MISS CAROLINE
CLARENDON.

Harley-Street.

MY DEAR NIECE,

SIR James Saville has so much real reason for resentment, that I try not to obtain for Maria, what any other Daughter would have *sued* for, an interview with her Father: between ourselves, it is better avoided, for her spirit is so very ungovernable, that I should only dread making the breach wider. Both the delinquents have offended me highly this morning, and obliged me to tell them,—“that the sooner they looked after their future abode the more agreeable it would be to me and my Wife.” Maria is in her tantrums, and desired her Husband to

appeal to the laws for her fortune ; for, since she was driven to the trial, she would let her Father know she would not tamely submit to the cheat. It was in vain I endeavoured to silence her, or her boisterous companion, who assures me Lady Staffordson's intelligence can *never* be doubted. They are both, however, in the way of being convinced about their mistake, for a hackney-coach is conducting them to the Commons, to look over Mr. Clarendon's will, and they will return a little more humbled, I know.

In the mood they quitted this house, you will not be surprized to hear that I was *ordered* to inform Sir James they would neither accept the annuity, nor a shilling less than the fifteen thousand pounds belonging to her Mother. But all this is *entres nous* : the more faulty she is, the more incumbent it is on us to reclaim her. As to O'Reilly, he he might go to the devil and welcome

for me, but I do not say the same of his head-strong ridiculous Wife.

In the evening, I mean to talk over Sir James to pay the Jew off who raised the two thousand pounds for Lady Staffordson, or he does nothing. O'Reilly will rot in a jail,—and the girl be on the town, I am convinced, unless they begin the world free of incumbrance; but I thought I had best acquaint my three eloquent females, that they may strenuously join me in what I fear will prove difficult.—Bear me out, my good girls—let us bring this strayed sheep back to the fold—neglect her, and she is irrecoverably lost. She acknowledged to me and my Wife, this morning, that Lady Staffordson told her O'Reilly had a very large fortune and title in reversion. Maria then insisted upon a large settlement, when the infernal woman laughed at her for ignorance, and assured her the Wife of an Irish-

man, whose estate lay in *that* kingdom, was, by the law of the land, entitled to half, even during his life-time. Delighted to hear it, she hastened the marriage, for fear such a fortune should slip through her fingers. The man is extremely handsome, and looks like a gentleman, but is very shallow and proud. Madam's pride is excessively great, but it cannot disguise the mortification she feels at being convinced she has humbled herself. Prepare, if you see a good opportunity, the way for me, by keeping the coast clear of strangers. I need not tell you that I enjoy the fair prospects which await my dear Nieces ; being truly their affectionate Uncle and friend,

W. MORTIMER.

LETTER CI.

FROM MISS CAROLINE CLARENDON TO
WILLIAM MORTIMER, ESQ.

Grosvenor-Square.

MY DEAR UNCLE,

I HAVE just read over your letter, and application for our interest in the affair of this evening, which we shall all be most happy to comply with; if possible, even at the risque of a moment's displeasure from our excellent friend Sir James. But it will depend upon circumstances; for I have seen him so deeply affected already, that I dread to distress him. Nevertheless we hope to be able to second your motion, but cannot venture to promise absolutely.

When my Guardian had finished his letter to you, he came into my dressing-room, where Sophia and Fanny were

working by me. He flung down the paper, in much agitation, and said, "Would to God I could cast off my anguish in this way!" I winked to the girls to leave the conversation to me, and said all that I could say in condemnation of that artful, shameless woman at Brussels, and of the youth and credulity of Maria, which, if considered without prejudice, were palliations of her conduct, though not apologies for it. "Miss Clarendon," said Sir James, "I find that you think me unjust!" "God forbid, Sir! for what reason?" "Because, unless you thought me wrong, you would not have occasion to plead." "Pardon me, Sir James, I do not attempt to plead to a Father, who has a better advocate in his own breast for an erring child. I only *remind* you of what appears to me some little extenuation of, not an excuse for, her crime." Seizing my hand, he replied, "My dear Caroline! you never deceived me. My sweet Fanny,

Sophia, and you, have alike charmed me by your commiseration of a fallen Child and afflicted Father. I intreat you, never renew *this* conversation after *this* hour. Do me the favour to read that letter over aloud." I attempted the task, but it affected my speech; when Sir James reached it out of my hands, and clearing his voice, he read it from the beginning, while the tears gushed from his eyes. When the letter was ended a silence ensued, and Sir James took his seat on the sofa behind us. Near three minutes passed, when I turned to the spot, and found that my Guardian had fainted. His feelings are cruelly irritated. I trust, my dear Uncle, that a relation of this scene will be a sufficient apology if we do not join you this evening; but if any opportunity offers, I repeat, that every one of the trio will willingly lend you our voices.

I do not chuse to write to Mrs. O'Reilly, but I request you to tell her,

that provided she behaves with propriety in the humble walk of life she has chosen, I will allow her, at the end of the second year, an annual addition of fifty pounds, but only upon condition that her conduct is blameless. We have no engagement this evening. The men dine at the club at the Crown and Anchor, so that there is little probability of their spending a *sober* hour with us. We join in duty to you and my Aunt. Believe me to be, dear Uncle, your dutiful Niece,

CAROLINE CLARENDON.

P. S. Sophia and Fanny think Sir James would be less agitated, if you wrote.

LETTER CII.

FROM WILLIAM MORTIMER, ESQ. TO SIR
JAMES SAVILLE, BART.

MY DEAR SIR JAMES,

I AM happy to assure you, that so far from hesitation, the culprits acknowledge their obligation to you for a more liberal income than O'Reilly ever possessed in his life. But I will fairly own, that a review of Mr. Clarendon's will in Doctor's Commons has effected this gratitude ; for the arch fiend, Lady Staffordson, has deceived him as well as your Daughter, by an assurance that neither the forfeited property, nor the late Lady Saville's fortune, were under the least controul from you. I only mention this, to astonish you at the science this wretch has made of duplicity.

I almost imagine you have forgot the *purchase* money this creature exact-

ed from Mr. O'Reilly, as the price of her friend. Unless we enable him to set out free of incumbrance, we do nothing: the man will be laid by the heels, and a prison would ruin his Wife. I only remind you of danger: let me know the result, as I will, if commissioned by you, free him from the Jewish yoke: what are the terms I have not enquired into, for I have much business on my hands, by the death of poor Blendale, who has left me trustee for his children. As I shall see you at dinner to-morrow, I had rather you would take time for consideration, and spare yourself the trouble of answering this. O'Reilly and his baggage are now on their way to Somersetshire, where I have advised them to settle. The Rector of a village there is my particular friend, and I have desired him to have an eye to them both; for their folly is no excuse for our neglect in toto. I am, dear Sir James, your's sincerely

W. MORTIMER.

Harley-Street.

LETTER CIII.

FROM MISS CAROLINE CLARENDON TO THE
COUNTESS OF ALCONDALE.

A VERY pretty sort of a lady you are, truly ! to have *your* opinions set up and defended, in defiance of *our's*:— But we have humbled your champions compleatly, and decreed *you* to your bed, and *your* arguments all to oblivion. I have not receded an inch, being, as Captain Belgrave affirms, the most unpitying, hardened, and obstinate woman in England. Poor fool ! I do not contradict him. Now I repeat, that I mean to remain in lawful possession of the name of Clarendon till I have stood Godmother either to little Charles or little Caroline. Surely I have a right to exercise my caprices just now ! for their reign is drawing to a hasty conclusion. So pray, pray,

make yourself easy, and comfort the beaux for their total defeat.

I was last night obliged to re-introduce Sophia to several people, who did not know her again: Such a change does peace of mind effect in the countenance, which is the heart's octave. On Thursday she is to be presented. Sir James pays her the same compliment he did Sir Frederick. Your Aunt has very obligingly desired to *chaperon* her, for Mrs. Irwin's cough is too violent to suffer her to go. I am pleased at my Guardian's intention, as every thing which takes him from *himself*, is of service to his spirits. He certainly gets more cheerful daily. The Duchess is come to settle the etiquettes with Sophia, so I must hurry down stairs; which must apologize for this hasty conclusion. I am sincerely, now and always, your obliged

CAROLINE CLARENDON,

Grosvenor-Square.

LETTER CIV.

FROM WILLIAM MORTIMER, ESQ. TO SIR
JAMES SAVILLE, BART.

DEAR SIR JAMES,

I FEAR that you have thought me extremely dilatory on the negotiation I undertook with Abraham Levi, but this affair has been attended with other delays than mine, the particulars of which I hasten to give you. I called three times in the Minories before I could meet him ; but at last I succeeded by accident, as I am convinced, for he was issuing forth from his miserable dwelling, and seemed truly confounded, which, had he known my errand was to *pay*, not to *receive*, would not have been the case. I told him I was ready to take up the bond O'Reilly had given, paying interest for the weeks he had had the two thou-

sand, provided it did not expressly mention the length of time the money was borrowed for: he told me it did, and stated the time to be three months; that the bond was in the hands of his Principal, who was now abroad, but who meant to return before it was due; and that he was merely the agent, and received a trifling gratuity for his trouble. I required the name of his Principal, which he refused. I then asked the interest expected for the loan, when he replied that this was not mentioned, but was expected to be lawful interest of five per cent. but that a *douceur* of five hundred pounds was agreed upon between the parties, and drawn up as a debt due from Captain O'Reilly to the Principal for value received. I told him I was commissioned to deal with his employer, and therefore must insist upon knowing his name, and what part of the world he was in, as I was the agent to settle O'Reilly's affairs. The fellow considered

a minute, and then assured me he could not give up the name, as he was under orders of secrecy. "Use your own discretion," said I, "Mr. Levi, if you do not give up your Principal's name, I shall consider you as the ostensible person, and drag you into a Court of Justice, to answer for the iniquity of so usurious a transaction." The elevation of my voice had an electrical effect upon his nerves. He said, that sooner than that, he would give up his employer, who proves to be no other than that honourable, immaculate, disinterested friend of Maria's, the Countess of Staffordson.

Not a penny shall the infamous cat ever touch: the two thousand she issued forth to O'Reilly she has received again, and if it cost me ten times as much, she shall never finger another shilling, if I can help it. "This is very sufficient," said I, "and her Ladyship will, no doubt, pay you the gratuity, when she re-

turns from Brussels." I walked off to Bedford-Square, where I enquired when she was expected? The house-keeper answered, "she did not know, but the Earl was looked for that night." I was surprized at this news; but the woman said, "some unexpected circumstances obliged his Lordship to come without loss of time; his Lady had so cruelly abused his confidence, that he was going to get a divorce. Previous to her elopement with Mr. Westly, the Steward," she added, "every piece of plate in the house was converted to cash. The poor children are here, and one's heart aches to think that a Mother could leave them in so shameful a manner!" I shall do nothing further in this business till I have your orders. As Lord Staffordson is arrived, I think it would be proper to wait upon him previous to any new steps being taken in this wonderful affair. Pray do not spare me, for I have real pleasure in relieving you.

from any disagreeable business, and still greater in trouncing this horrible woman. My Wife joins in best compliments. I am ever affectionately your's,

W. MORTIMER.

Harley-Street.

LETTER CV.

FROM MISS CAROLINE CLARENDON TO THE
COUNTESS OF ALCONDALE.

WELL, my loved friend, I can only *wish* that I had not bragged of my resolves, my determinations, my decrees, and a long list of dittos, as I should have been spared the shame of writing my mortification at the total defeat we have this day sustained. Nothing less than a recantation of our errors would satisfy Sir James Saville,

who was appointed by Sir Frederick and Belgrave Judge *Advocate*. We defended our rights as long as we could, but my Guardian made *his* rule absolute, and on Thursday Sophia and I set forward in the contest of which shall make the best Wife. It is the ambition of each to make our Husbands be winners, so that the match will be very hard run. Lord Trecourcy, who is master of the second sight, declares, that the plate will be divided between us, as the best judges will never be able to decide in a matter of such equality. We have been escorted by him to Lady Lucy Saville this morning, who consented to make her appearance in the same situation with us on the Thursday. I grieve for poor Beaumont, who is very reluctantly left out of the party; but Fanny Saville has done what I highly approve, nevertheless; she has promised to have him at his return from Gibraltar: the intermediate year she passes with Sir James, who

really requires the attentions of one child to enable him to parry the blow which the other has given his health and peace of mind. Her Father urged her to consult her own happiness, and determine accordingly: she assured him she did so; and Capt. Beaumont was convinced that she could not be happy even with *him*, while Sir James was alone. This gentleman has a thousand good qualities, and will make the old man a most estimable son-in-law. You have heard of Lady Staffordson's flight; they lived all the journey as man and wife: at Brussels she passes him off for her Brother. The ungrateful Westly was raised by the Earl from a livery servant to the stewardship, which act of kindness he has so basely returned; but where such intercourses happen, I am sure the woman must always be the original aggressor. Her precious friend, Lady Hellendale, tells a thousand infamous things of this shameless woman, which makes her even still more despicable

than I thought her, by keeping up the acquaintance.

An account has just come from Mrs. O'Reilly to Mr. Mortimer, written in great distress, as her Husband has carried her over to Ireland, instead of to Somersetshire, and placed her amongst his relations, a very low set, declaring that he will spend his fortune amongst them. She has written *unknown*, so my Uncle does not intend to answer it, but he will do what he can to serve them, nevertheless. She is, poor deluded girl, an example to all the young people of her acquaintance, to avoid contracting friendships with people their parents do not recommend, for all her misfortunes spring from this one source. Who in the world can be so interested for a child as fond parents? Whatever they do, must be designed for their offspring's advantage; but some girls never believe this till it is too late, and the consequence is, they are neglected

by the good, and this consciousness makes them wretched within. It sincerely grieves me that she should fall into such hands; but I am sure it was not for the want of advice. As to guarding against Lady Staffordson of *late*, that never entered our heads, for who could think any creature so mean as to correspond with a person who had behaved so shamefully about the diamond crescent? I have little leisure to write, you may be certain; but I did not chuse any other friend should give you the intelligence of our submission to the Fates before I *had* done it.

I have all my paraphernalia to make against Thursday; for as Sir Frederick Hambledon chose cloaths himself for his bride, I chuse that his bride should wear them---mine will be duplicates. Sir James gave Sophia Maria's jewels, which were never given to her by Father or Mother; but my Guar-

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dian meant always to divide them, when his Daughters married. Sir Frederick has been all along a friend to this sad girl, and gave her the most kind advice, but in vain, though she promised to follow it. Adieu, my dear friend, till to-morrow !---Come early to your obliged

CAROLINE CLARENDON.

LETTER CVI.

FROM W. MORTIMER, ESQ. TO SIR JAMES
SAVILLE, BART.

DEAR SIR JAMES,

WITHIN half an hour after my letter had reached you, I was reading a paper, where I saw an advertisement desiring all persons indebted to, or having any claims upon, the Countess of Staffordson, to repair to the Earl's house in Bedford-Square, where they would be immediately settled. This morning I went, and was received by

Mr. Thrale the Solicitor, to whom I related my business: when I mentioned my name, he quitted the room, and in five minutes introduced me to Lord Staffordson, who prepossessed me extremely in his favour, by the elegance of his person and manner. He enquired after you, and said he proposed to himself the honour of waiting upon you, as Lord Trecourcy had promised to pave his way with Sir James. After a recapitulation of the circumstances which had passed in this Jewish transaction, he entreated that you would not hold yourself bound to discharge the two thousand O'Reilly borrowed, as the money was taken from Lady Staffordson's *right* handed pocket, and immediately conveyed into the *left*: that if any steps were taken (by a woman he was seeking to be divorced from) of an unpleasant nature, he desired to refer us to Mr. Thrale; for he was determined nobody but himself should suffer for her imprudences.

“Notwithstanding her follies,” said he, “I cherished hopes of reclaiming her. I loved her so passionately that I dreaded to give her a moment’s uneasiness. I knew, if I expressed my displeasure at her conduct, at Bath, in a *conversation*, her tears would render every syllable I uttered abortive, for I never could stand them, which is one reason why she has persisted in error. Persuaded that an immediate mark of my displeasure, by leaving England abruptly, would restore her to her senses, and cause her to repent of her past conduct, as well as amend her future, I did a temporary violence to myself for the sake of my children. My eldest son accompanied me, and can tell how heavy my hours have passed, except when a letter from his Mother, filled with contrition for having driven me from her, and promises never to offend me again; made me bless Heaven that I had taken this step, which had wrought such a change in

her heart : not a month ago did she write to entreat my return, and assured me, she had suffered my just indignation to prey so searchingly upon her mind, that her health was impaired in so great a degree, that I should not know her again. Grieved, yet delighted, I determined to return to my wife and my children, to enjoy the first happiness the world could afford me, the sweets of domestic life. I sent for the passports, and summoned my tradesmen, paid every bill, and took leave of my friends,—when a letter from Thrale, my Solicitor, informed me that Lady Staffordson had been to raise money of him, that she had lately involved herself deeply, and that the confectioner had sent an execution into the house, for articles used at her suppers and balls. Confounded with this intelligence, I retracted my orders, and wrote her a letter couched in the most affectionate terms, avoiding the most distant hint of Thrale's informa-

tion, beseeching her to continue in the amiable frame of mind her letter was written in, and desiring her acceptance of four notes of five hundred pounds each, to defray all her debts, about *which* I should spare her any enquiry. It concluded with praying that the remainder of our lives might be spent in harmony; and telling her, that in the week, I should quit Paris for London. Even here, Mr. Mortimer, I trusted that the generous conduct I had exerted towards her would be a new motive for her future behaviour to be irreproachable. But alas! I flattered myself with fallacious hopes. She has corrupted my steward, and taken this companion of her pleasures and villainy with her. My own servants, as well as the Inns on the Dover road, can furnish me with proofs to obtain a divorce. Allow me, Sir, to repeat to you, that I request Sir James Saville to send the bond, when presented, to me; I will settle every thing which concerns that woman. She is

still the Mother of my children:—had she never known Lady Hellendale, she might have continued my Wife.

A servant interrupted us by saying “Lady Frances was come.” So we went into the drawing-room, where the two little girls were taking leave of their Brothers, to go with the Aunt, who had requested the Father to let them be under her care; they are, boys and girls, very charming children,—and, notwithstanding the Mother is so worthless, she has attended to their education in an uncommon degree. Lady Mary is nine, her Sister but seven.—When her Father had kissed them, he said, “you must think often of *me*, my dears.” “Yes, Papa, and of Mamma too, must not I?” Her Aunt gave her a hint to be silent. “Why, Mamma,” she replied, “always bid us love our Papa, because she did, and therefore he will love us for loving Mamma.” The poor man suffered, re-kissed his children, and parted.

Bills are pouring in from all quarters—not a shilling has she paid of the two thousand Lord Staffordson sent her—the very money she lent to O'Reilly, through Abraham Levi. She changed away the service of plate, and every valuable she could lay her hands upon.

I think it proper to acquaint you with the new step O'Reilly has taken. He has carried his Wife to his Irish relations at Ballinahoe. She wrote me this intelligence unknown to him, and tells me they are a desperate low set she has got amongst. I could serve her, if you wish it, as I am acquainted with many most amiable families in the county, who possess the national characteristic—Hospitality and Benevolence. The only hesitation I have, is, *Will it not involve her?* I shall not do any thing without your orders, be assured; and also that I remain, dear Sir James, your's most sincerely,

W. MORTIMER.

LETTER CVII.

FROM SIR JAMES SAVILLE, BART. TO WILLIAM
MORTIMEER, ESQ.

TWELVE o'clock is the hour appointed for the gentlemen of the long robe to meet here, for adjusting the Articles previous to to-morrow. A dinner engagement, and business in the evening, will make it impossible for me to thank you personally for the kind interest you have taken in all my affairs, or to have any farther conversation about them at present.

Lord Staffordson behaves like a gentleman. I shall contrive to leave my name at his door this morning. I find his infamous Wife stands little chance of having more than two hundred a

year allowed for her maintenance ; which I am glad of, as the future situation of an abandoned woman may have a more striking effect on the ill-inclined part of her sex, than any other punishment whatever. As to O'Reilly's deceit in carrying his Wife to his relations, I suppose it is an early specimen of what she is to expect from him ; but I shall not interfere ; she will be obliged to obey him, and I shall never encourage her in disobedience. At my death I shall cancel my anger by adding some little sum to her income : but I never will see her again. The affectionate and dutiful conduct of Fanny has restored me to peace ; the striking blemishes in one child have called forth those virtues, which, for want of occasion to bring them into action, lay dormant in the other. The satisfaction shall rise superior to the regret, for I will not suffer myself to dwell longer on the base ingratitude I have met with from an undutiful Daughter.

Sophia caught a little cold at the drawing-room : she has wrapt up her cheek, which is in danger of swelling ; but I have become guarantee for her beauty to-morrow. Regarding Caroline equal with Fanny, I feel the same interest for her Sister. How thankful am I to behold these amiable, charming young women about to be so desirably disposed of ! The men richly merit them. As to Belgrave, Caroline has, in their nine years' affection, moulded him after her own heart. All those little impetuosities which I have formerly seen, (for he never had any disguise) seem entirely subdued. Sir Frederick you know my opinion of very well. They cannot fail to be happy. God grant them every blessing. The Lawyers are come, so farewell !—Truly your's,

JAMES SAVILLE.

LETTER CVIII.

FROM THE COUNTESS OF ALCONDALE TO THE
DOWAGER LADY ALCONDALE, GRAFFHAM-
PARK, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

YOU know I have too unfeigned a pleasure at all times in complying with any request you can make me, to be either negligent or forgetful upon the present occasion. The spirit with which you entered into all the minutiae of the wedding apparel designed for the twelfth of December, made me resolve to describe every thing in the dress of each party, for your entertainment; and though it is rather a difficult job, and calculated for the completion of a boarding-school Miss's meridian, I hesitated not to send it, and hope my letter reached your Ladyship's hands. Sir James Saville has been elegantly munificent; every thing before, and at the time, has been dis-

tinguished by the most liberal conduct : but, as you know the man, this information is quite unnecessary. Your Son and I, the Irwins and Mortimers, dined there ; and at eight the whole troop of Bride-men and Bride-maids, with Lord Trecourcy's Father, Lord Bracebridge, and some very intimate friends of all parties, made their appearance, when we joined them in the anti-drawing-room. The Bishop's arrival, at nine, brought up the gentlemen, who every one led a lady into the great room, and he proceeded to the performance of his office. Every thing was adjusted according to the new mode of a long narrow table, which enabled his Lordship to join the three pair of hands across it. Lord Trecourcy led the way, Lord Bracebridge, his Father, gave away Lady Lucy, who was magnificent in point of jewels ; for that worthy old woman, Mrs. Barbara Saville, has presented her with all the family diamonds, which have been re-set for the occasion.

The next pair were Sir Frederick Hambledon and Sophia, whose elegant simplicity of dress, contrasted with Lady Lucy's splendour, had a most interesting and happy effect. He looked graceful to a degree, and was uncommonly well-dressed, in a dark velvet, shot with rose colour and green; and white satin waistcoat, embroidered with coloured silks. Mr. Irwin gave away the bride. Last, and not least in beauty or grace, came Caroline and Belgrave. Sir James Saville has always been in the habit of playing the Father to her, and you may be assured he did so upon such an occasion: in short, they all looked charmingly. But as I have a terrible hand at description, I must leave it to "friend Howard's genius" to "fancy all the rest."

As soon as the favours were distributed, tea, coffee, and ices made their appearance: at half past ten the ball-room received us, where many friends waited our entrance. The supper con-

sisted of luxuries the four seasons combined to produce. Sir James's liberal spirit was evident in every thing. We staid till near three o'clock, and left many there, who kept up the spirit of the ball till five. On this day week all the parties dine with us, and on the previous one we meet all together at Sir James's, and so many are our engagements, that they already comprehend three weeks to come; when those who *can* go, will go. Lord and Lady Trecourcy are at Bracebridge-park; the Hambledons at Clarendon-place, which Sir James lends them; and the Belgraves at Belgrave lodge, till next week.

I went an airing this morning, and met all the Bride-men and Bride-maids sporting their favours in driving over the town. The numbers look more like a Royal wedding than any other. The three swains sent donations of fifty pounds each for the relief of small debtors—such was Belgrave's motion.

When I read over my letter, it seems more like the winding up of a *Novel* than a reality : nay, when I look back to the many strange events,—disappointment ending in success, and success in disappointment, rewards of the virtuous, and punishments of the wicked, which have attended the several persons I speak of,—I am half inclined to brandish my pen, and give their histories to the public; under fictitious names.—Seriously speaking, they would afford an admirable lesson. In all these instances, Virtue has suffered for a time, and been amply compensated by blessings : Vice has triumphed for a little, and then met with disgrace :—even Error has brought on its object much lasting regret, and justifies the propriety of Mr. Irwin's frequent advice, which says, “ Do no *wrong*, for *right* to come of it.” I long to assure you, *viva voce*, of the affection of your Ladyship's dutiful Daughter,

M. ALCONDALE.

F I N I S.



